Flying Snake

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FLYING SNAKE SUBSCRIPTION AND GUIDELINES

Established by Richard Muirhead aka Dr Devo in 2011

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112 High St

Macclesfield

SK11 7QQ

UK

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Co-Editors are Carl Marshall (U.K.) & Mike Hardcastle (Australia)

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Pay Pal payments: richardmuirhead66@outlook.com

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CONTENTS

Dr Devo`s Diary 4

Man Persecuting Toads? Richard Colborne 5 - 6

Lynx Reintroduction Marcus Matthews 7

An Assortment of Germans who saw Yetis… Ulrich Magin 8 - 12

Mike Hardcastle 13

Romans in the USA Richard Muirhead 13 - 15

On the Dhole in Hong Kong Jon Downes Richard Muirhead and Charlotte Phillipson 16 - 21

The Curious Case of Britain`s Coin Anomalies Richard Muirhead 22 - 26

Rains of Animals in Spain Javier Resines 27 - 37

Rock Dogs and Top-End Tigers Michael Williams and Rebecca Lang 38 - 45

Animal Internment Carl Marshall 46 - 52

Notes & Queries 53 - 72

Devo Space Junk 73

E-mails and Letters 74- 75

Letters to Fate 76 - 77

Book Reviews 78 - 79

Dr Devo`s Diary

"*For I pray God for the introduction of new creatures into this island. For I pray God for the ostriches of Salisbury Plain, the beavers of the Medway and silver fish of Thames." Christopher Smart `Rejoice in the Lamb`. Poet, naturalist, lunatic (1722-1771.)* Spuds, Dr Devo`s back!! It`s that exciting moment you`ve all been waiting for when Flying Snake flutters through your letter box to await your eager gaze. This issue has a somewhat Australian flavour I am glad to say thanks to Mike Hardcastle`s excellent piece on the Yowie and Rebecca Lang and Michael William`s equally important essay on the Queensland Tiger. The Queensland Tiger has been eclipsed by the thylacine in the cryptozoology stakes in recent years but nevertheless has been a cryptid which has fascinated me for a while. The most significant event personally so far this year is that apart from publishing Flying Snake the journal, the collected issues 1– 5 have been issued by Centre for Fortean Zoology Press this Spring as one volume, available on amazon.co.uk and elsewhere, see back cover. I have two items in this issue penned by myself, U.K coin anomalies and the question of Roman artifacts in the U.S.A. Seeing as Norse people reached Newfoundland and the Phoenicians Great Britain,surely it`s not beyond the bounds of possibility for the Romans , albeit few in number, to have explored or journeyed as far as North America? Apart from cryptozoology, Muirhead Mansions is happy to announce the publication of Dr Devo`s fourth book, namely `China and the West: Conflict and Opportunity with special reference to the "Yellow Peril" prejudice, which is the 2nd edition of `China: A Yellow Peril?` published by CFZ Press in 2009. I have just shortly before finishing this particular issue of Flying Snake found a story from 19th Century Oregon about some wild cats with protruding horns but there is not enough time to really do further research on this at present.

Man Persecuting Toads?

An article in response to the story in Flying Snake number 13 (page 14),entitled "Toads Persecuting Man"

Richard Colborne

One strange fact related to the article "Toads Persecuting Man" is that the very place where the sick man was, despite being placed in a bag and hauled up into a tree, supposed to have been eaten by a toad swarm, is called Trellyffant, which literally means Toad Town! The word `llyffant` is usually used to describe toads, but can mean either frogs or toads: frogs more so in North Wales. The more common word for frog in Wales is `broga`; a borrowing from Medieval English and the forerunner of the modern name by a simple process called `sound shift`. In this instance the B of `broga` has softened first into a V (possibly unattested) and then to an F;then the final vowel was dropped to give us `frog`. Clearly the noun `llyfant` is derived from the Welsh verb llyfu, to lick; so basically `llyffant` means `lickable.`Though the story told by Giraldus Cambrensis alludes to toads being `venomous` ,one wonders if this might have been a desirable quality :one could lick the toad and get high! Apparently some species of toad exude a compound known as bufotenin or 5-HO-DMT, which is very similar to that found in some toadstools, which is tryptamine or 5-MeO-DMT.This writer is not a chemist, and it may be that some toads and some toadstools exude or contain both bufotenin and tryptamine. A thing that may have puzzled other readers as long as it has puzzled the writer of this article is what association there may be between toads and toadstools. The simple answer is that there is no association between the toad (a crawling anuran) and the toadstool (a fungus),

though there is a strong connection between the names of both. The writer`s interest here is in `sound shift` (an area within linguistics), rather than in cryptozoology, but the connection between the words `toad` and `toxin` was made by other researchers: this writer had looked for it and missed it (Doh!)

Among other slight changes; the X in `toxin` softened to a G (as in the word for `toad` in certain other languages), before softening to a D in the English word `toad`! Yes;this is the connection between toads and toadstools: they are both poisonous! Or looking at it another way; many of both are poisonous but some also contain psychotropic compounds.

Bufo alvarius is a toad found in northern Mexico and southern USA, which is widely known for providing users with good `highs`! Did Bufo alvarius once live in Britain, or was there another species that exuded a psychotropic compound? Though all toads exude toxins - some of which ,if ingested, can prove fatal - neither the Common Toad, Bufo bufo, nor the Natterjack toad, Epidalea calamita (formerly called Bufo calamita) exude 5-HO-DMT or 5-Me DMT in any usable quantity as far as I can ascertain. In the story told by Giraldus Cambrensis,the victim - the young man consumed by the toad swarm— went by the name of Cecil Longlegs. The name Cecil may be no more than an English spelling of the Welsh `Seisyll`, but `Longlegs` is an unusual name; it might refer to the long hind legs of the very toads that consumed Cecil! A little speculatively; the name Cecil might rather be a transliteration of the Welsh word `cyfeill`, and though the C of `cyfeill` is hard, as C always is in Welsh;the word means `friend` , and `Friend Longlegs` would be an apt name for a psychotropic toad! Was the original story about a man persecuted by toads - to death no less - or was the reality that the toads were persecuted by man? Despite being regarded as friends, maybe the defenceless toads were just licked into extinction!

Lynx Reintroduction

Marcus Matthews

The re-introduction of lynxes to the Hartz mountains of Germany and Austria has happened. Also the re-introduction of lynxes to the Jura and Alps has happened. There have been scientific studies of these re-introductions Six Lynxes are planned to be re-introduced to the Kelder forest in Northumberland by the Lynx Trust UK. This re-introduction was due in 2018. There was a farmer who shot a lynx in Yorkshire in 2002 and a lynx escaped from Riber Castle zoo in the 199O's. It was recaptured.

The Scottish wildcat has been re-introduced to Scotland and the Highland Wildlife Park and Edinburgh zoo have a breeding programme. The Scottish wildcat may only number from a hundred to three hundred and it interbreeds with domestic cats so there is a colour variation in the coat. The Kellas cat is still found in the Grampian region and Morayshire and is black with some white markings. In Scottish folklore there was the cat siath-possibly the Kellas cat. There have been a dozen Kellas Cat dead specimens obtained and three live specimens. They were bred in captivity by Di Francis but the kittens were killed by their mother.

There are lynxes in captivity in Europe and there are two species-the northern lynx and the Spanish pardel lynx. There may also be some escaped caracal lynxes from North Africa. The subject is monitored by the British Bigcats society and Bigcats in Britain and the Centre for Fortean Zoology.

The reports get into the local and national press and on TV, internet, and radio.

An Assortment of Germans who Saw Yetis, and a Yeti seen in Germany

Ulrich Magin

This is a wild assortment with little to stick it together than the theme of the cryptid ape, and some German involvement.

To start with the "yeti" seen in Germany, this source was found by our esteemed Dr. Devo, Richard Muirhead. In a small book published in 1831 (Wilson, T. (ed.): P*eter Parley's tales about the world*. London: Darton and Co. 1831, S. 108) we read about a journey from Danzig to Berlin, which led through East Prussia, a former German region that is now part of Poland and Russia:

"There are great many large forests in Prussia. Some years ago, as some huntsmen were passing through one of these forests, they saw a strange animal, looking something like a man. They pursued it, but it ran from them: they followed it for a long time; at length it entered a cave in one of the mountains.

Here they caught it, and what do you think it was? It was a wild man, who had always lived in the woods. He had not any clothes, nor could he talk, but only growled and chattered. He ate grass, leaves, and berries. They took him away and tried to teach him to speak, but he would only chatter. He was very cross, and endeavoured to strike everybody that did anything to displease him. "

This case cannot refer to the well-known wild boy of Hamlin (1727) or to the wild boy of Kronstadt, Rumania, from 1784.

Heinrich Harrer and the Yeti

For English-speaking people, Heinrich Harrer will be best remembered as Brad Pitt in the movie version of his memoirs, *Seven Years in Tibet*. Harrer went to the Himalayas in World War II, very likely as a Nazi spy, and escaped from a British internment camp and moved to Tibet, where he became a friend of the young Dalai Lama. (Incidentally, he was later an acquaintance of my father, but in the 1960s.) During his escape, he found strange tracks on the border of India and Tibet in February 1945: "At the timber line I came across deep tracks in freshly fallen snow which I could not identify and which might well have been those of a man. People with more phantasy as I have would have inferred ´they were made by one of the

deep tracks in freshly fallen snow which I could not identify and which might well have been those of a man. People with more phantasy as I have would have inferred ´they were made by one of the abominable snowmen." (Heinrich Harrer: *Sieben Jahre in Tibet*. Berlin: Ullstein 1959 (1952), p. 73) **The first photo of a yeti?**

On 8 May 1988, at 6 p.m., dusk fell on the Himalaya. 29-year-old mountaineer Hubert Vollmer from Baden-Baden, Germany, was climbing in the Solu Kumbu Gorge, Nepal, when he noticed a movement in the corner of his eyes. "I sensed a movement and looked up the rock wall, frightened to death. That's when I saw it. A terrible monster. Two metres tall, shaggy fur in several shades of brown, a flat nose and a flat face. It looked like an ape, a frightening gorilla. The yeti!" The encounter lasted less than two minutes. "When the yeti noticed me, we looked into each other's eyes for a second. It stood upright, a giant. Then, suddenly, it was gone. On all fours." Vollmer managed to take a snap from a distance of 100 ft. (Wolfram Winkler: „Das ist der Yeti". *Bunte,* 21 July 1988, p. 24–25) The picture, which I have only as a Xerox, shows a dark furry form looming over a rock, looking very ape-like indeed. I assume that the somewhat breathless manner of the account is due to the reporter, not the observer. (credit: Michel Raynal).

Karl May and the Yahoo

Karl May was an author from Saxony who wrote almost 100 novels at the end of the 19th, and in the early 20th century, which – he claimed – we all true travel adventures. In fact, he had never left his hometown but read extensively to add local colour to his manuscripts. (He later went to trial for having misled his readers ...) Most of the novels are either of the wild west genre (where he claims he was honorary chief of all Indians), or take place in the Middle East. (see more at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_May) *Durch die Wüste* (Through the Desert) describes his travels through Egypt, Saudi Arabia (including Mecca), and up to Kurdistan. It is the first volume of the so called orient cycle, and was first serialized in the magazine *Der deutsche Hausschatz* in the years from 1881 to 1888. In this series of novels, Karl May, whom the Arabs call Kara ben Nemsi, is always the superior European and Christian, while all the Arabs and Muslims are superstitious idiots (those were the times – but May was not a racist, he simply believed Christianity to be the superior religion, while all races were of equal value, if only they could all faith). He rides to Kurdistan to visit the Yazids (which he thinks are a Christian sect, and which have been sop sadly in the news recently), and his Muslim comrades are full of

value if only they could accept his faith). He rides to Kurdistan to visit the Yazids (which he thinks are a Christian sect, and which have been sop sadly in the news recently), and his Muslim comrades are full of fear because they believe the Yazids are devil worshippers. Kara ben Nemsi explains: "I once visited a country far beyond the great Sea; we Franks call it Australia. I encountered wild men there who have a sheitan which they call yahu and which they worship." (Karl May: *Durch die Wüste*. Tosa, no place, no year, p. 316)

Nothing more. Yahu is simply the German phonetic rendering of yahoo. May must have read about the yahoo in some German language book on Australia, where they were described not as gorillas, but as evil spirits worshipped by the aboriginals.

Karl May and Bigfoot?

In the *Mitteilungen der Karl-May-Gesellschaft* (vol. 23, nr. 88, June 1991, p. 52), we find a piece by Horst Friedrich, a well-known alternative scientist in Germany. Under the title "Böse Geister in Schluchten und Cañons" he wonders whether a paragraph in the book *Winnetou III* (originally published in 1893) which says the Indians were afraid of malevolent spirits in the canyons, might refer to Sasquatch. The canyons of the story are at the Idaho/Wyoming border, but I think that this has nothing to do with ape-men... (credit: Dr Franziska Dokter)

Hoening's Canadian Neanderthal Man

There has been speculation about how human-like the American Sasquatch actually is. There is a German hobby researcher who claims he discovered a fossil Neanderthal man in a river bed in Alberta, Canada, in June 1977. This find, a piece of skull, was not accepted by scientists. It was found below a large stone in the bed of the Stone Creek, this stone had five points, and the author claimed it was a Neanderthal grave with Neanderthal art. I found it most unconvincing, but it might be worth a side note. The book by A. E. F. Hoening is titled *Fundort Stone Creek. Die Entdeckung des amerikanischen Neandertalers* (Econ, Düsseldorf 1983). (= *The site Stone Creek: The Discovery of the American Neanderthal Man*)

Paraguay, South America: the Guaiquis

In this case, the reporter saw nothing, but notes second hand reports. He is Maximilian von Versen, a 19th century geographer, and records two South American apes in pretty racist style: „Professor Carl Voigt would certainly be interested to learn that in the north of the country

there lives a race of humans who by all their similarity to the apes, have still less intelligence than these. They are called Guaiquis. In addition to several communications by the Guaranis an Italian priest and an Englishman described several captured individuals of this tribe whom they had personally seen, as follows: 'They are small, wasted away in all body parts, have a head built like that of an ape, they even wink and grin like one. The colour is dark grey tending to blackish, they feed on roots, herbs and fruits, build no shelter and know neither clothing noir the use of fire. When they steal chicken in some of the remote estancias (farms), they swallow it raw. They do not possess language nor have any attempts to teach them one „Professor Carl Voigt would certainly be interested to learn that in the north of the country there lives a race of humans who, by all their similarity to the apes, have still less intelligence than these. They are called Guaiquis. In addition to several communications by the Guaranis an Italian priest and an Englishman described several captured individuals of this tribe whom they had personally seen, as follows: 'They are small, wasted away in all body parts, have a head built like that of an ape, they even wink and grin like one. The colour is dark grey tending to blackish, they feed on roots, herbs and fruits, build no shelter and know neither clothing noir the use of fire. When they steal chicken in some of the remote estancias (farms), they swallow it raw. They do not possess language nor have any attempts to teach them one met with any results, not even with a child. In all utterances of emotions, they grunt inarticulate sounds. That this race of cretins exists has been confirmed to me by all Europeans and it may be that Darwin knew of it, as it was South America where he received his theory of descent. In contrast, I have only heard in Paraguay about the strange tribe of the Guyracuys, especially from a 60-year-old corporal in San Fernando who has always lived at the eastern frontier and has seen them repeatedly.

While it is known that in Africa large apes without tails, the gorillas, have been discovered, these Guyracuys are said to have an elongation of the spine." (Maximilian von Versen: *Reisen in Amerika und der Südamerikanische Krieg*. Mälzer, 1872, S. 203–204.)

It is clear that the first apes are indicated as some very rough aboriginals, the second are likened to gorillas with tails. I have googled both indigenous names, bit without result.

Zealand newspaper, which is not included in the list in Healy's and Cropper's *Yowie* book:

Note
Keeping with gorillas and yahoos, but not with the Germany theme, I have found a report about an Australian example in 1905, in A New Zealand newspaper, which is not included in the list in Healy's and Cropper's *Yowie* book:

"A GORILLA AT LARGE. Some excitement has been caused at Eucharcena (N.S.W.) by the circulation of a rumour to the effect that a hairy man, or gorilla, had been seen in the depths of the bush there. Two well-known residents report having seen the fearsome-looking object. A youth, who unconsciously rode up in close proximity to the animal, received such a start that he started for home in record time. He has no doubt whatever but that the animal is a gorilla. For years past strange sounds have been heard in the thick scrub close to where this animal was seen, and a project is now on foot to form a search party and solve the mystery." (*New Zealand Herald* 21 September 1905, p. 3)

Romans in the USA

Richard Muirhead

Orthodox history proclaims that the Romans only reached as far west as Britain or possibly Ireland, however there is a body of un-orthodox Fortean beliefs that actually the Romans reached as far as what is now the United States. The volume 10,number 11 issue of Treasure magazine (an American magazine) had an article in it titled The Lost Ledge by Roman Malach in which he (or she?) postulated that a lost Roman colony once existed in Arizona: " Eighty or more of the newspaper clippings in the files of the Arizona Historical Society library in Tucson, Arizona, refer to an unbelievable story of ancient Romans who lived on the American continent and left scores of artifacts. Dr Byron Cummings, director of the Arizona State Museum, wrote a report about the discovery of the unusual artifacts…" In a trench near an old kiln , some eight miles out of Tucson, crosses were found along with swords and spears. "Most of the articles, moreover, lay at a depth of from five to six feet below the surface… The artifacts with one exception were crosses and weapons. The exception was a peculiar fan-shaped plate of lead carved on both sides, with one side showing a strange geometric design that had its counterpart on several of the other articles…" A Dr Fowler of the classical languages department at the University of Arizona deduced that inscriptions on the artifacts were in Latin: " Dr Fowler translated the inscriptions on two crosses, and the content was not only startling but unbelievable. The inscriptions revealed that in the year 775 AD., a number of ships with hundreds of Roman men, women and children sailed from Rome under the leader Theodorus...Theodorus founded the "Terra Calalus" city where the captured natives worked as slaves for the Romans. (1) The Roman camps were dated to around 776 and 779 AD. These artifacts became known as the

Silverbell Road artifacts and were discovered between 1924 and 1930.However according to the Wikipedia entry for the Tucson artifacts:

“Dean Cumming's student and excavator, Emil Haury, closely examined scratches on the surface of the objects as they were removed from the ground and concluded that they were planted, based partly on a cavity in the ground which was longer than a lead bar removed from it. After Cummings became president of the university, his views changed in an unclear manner, possibly due to Haury's skepticism, or the increasing sentiment that the items were nothing more than a hoax and as university president had to take a different stand on the matter. George M. B. Hawley staunchly opposed Bent's views about the objects. Hawley even accused Ostrander and Sarle as perpetrators of the hoax.”

An edition of Treasure Found! From Summer 1978, volume 4 number 2, author not credited, page 22 mentioned Roman coins in Florida. According to a Fox News web site (2) dated February 7th 2019, some Roman coins were found in the Bay Area of Tampa, Florida. “ One look and Eric was sold. "I took a very close look under the microscope and indeed, I'd have to say 85-90 percent authentic Roman coin," Eric said. By this time, Frank had found seven in total. They were all on the same beach, in a location he doesn't want to reveal to avoid a scavenger frenzy. "The implications that there could have been Romans here in the United States prior to Christopher Columbus is crazy. So if that can be proved or if someone can tell me how these coins got here that's really what we need to find out." Frank said. As of now, it's still a mystery centuries in the making; one that Frank is determined to solve.” On October 8th 2008 someone calling themselves pcolaboy posted the following on the treasurenet forum: “ I ran into a guy detecting on Pensacola Beach a couple of weeks ago and I just started some small talk about detecting, etc.

He said that he had recently found over 100 ancient Roman copper coins in a clay pot right off Hwy 90 in Crestview
I asked if he meant Spanish coins instead of Roman, but he said he was very sure since he said he had them identified.

The guy seemed normal enough but I'm still having trouble believing it - granted it could have been someone else's collection that had somehow gotten lost but this is just too strange. Has anyone up in the Panhandle area heard anything regarding this find?

Pcola (3) Crestview is in the far west of Florida. An alternative view that the Romans did *not* visit America was posted on the Quora web site on July 17th 2017

There is no evidence whatsoever that the Romans ever made it to North America. There are two very good reasons why they probably never did. First, the Romans were not great seafarers. Phoenicians, Vikings, or Polynesians they were not. That's why they expanded so far on land and not so much by sea.

Second, they were too far south. All of the reliable evidence we have for PreColumbian Europeans in the Americas involves people from either Northeastern Asia (Native Americans, later the Chukchi) or Northwestern Europe (the Vikings, possibly Irish monks like St Brendan) visiting Canada/Alaska. There is no reliable evidence whatsoever that anybody prior to Columbus was dumb enough to just go straight across the Atlantic from the lower latitudes over a much longer journey at sea (the kind the Polynesians excelled at in the Pacific, but Europeans? Not so much), or lucky enough to come back (though it is possible, again, that Brendan voyaged that far south, albeit only after crossing over in/near the Arctic).

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On the Dhole in Hong Kong

Inestigating the specific identity of Herklots' "wild dog"

By Jonathan Downes, Richard Muirhead, Charlotte Phillipson

INTRODUCTION

For over 50 years now, there have been a number of things that have intrigued Jonathan Downes about the mammals of Hong Kong. He wrote for *Porcupine!* magazine, back in May 2002, about some of the more peculiar aspects of the history of the South China tiger[1]. Elsewhere he has written about the mysteries surrounding the red fox in Hong Kong[2], something we may return to in these pages at some point. However, the conundrum that we wish to address at the moment is the specific identity of the wild dogs referred to by Herklots in his seminal book *The Hong Kong Countryside*.

> Red Dog, *Cuon javanicus lepturus* Heude
>
> This is a sub-species of the dhole or red dog of India which Rudyard Kipling, in one of his Mowgli stories "Red Dog," made familiar to the world. In India it hunts in packs. In the New Territories it is not seen in large packs but in small parties of three or four animals. They have been seen on Kai Tak aerodrome, in the Kowloon Hills, on Tai Mo Shan, at Castle Peak and elsewhere. I have never seen one. They are said to be reddish in colour and look in the distance like Alsatian dogs, but with shorter legs. They frequently visit the sea shore, probably in search of crabs, dead fish and other food. This wild dog must not be confused with the domestic dogs, said to be Alsatians and Chows, which have gone wild on Hong Kong Island and have bred. [3]

However, we have not been able to find corroboration for this statement, and what supporting evidence there is, is often contradictory.

The book was published in 1952, and presumably written over the preceding years. By Herklots' own admission[4], he wrote the book in London, a great deal of it from memory, and in a later work[5] he writes that:

> "My only visits to Hong Kong since I left in the summer of 1948 were a week in 1952."

We are only too aware that Wikipedia is a less than reliable source, but his entry[6] (whilst getting the year of his departure from Hong Kong completely wrong) gives a broadly correct overview of his career for the 30 years up to his retirement in 1960:

> From 1928 he was a reader in biology at Hong Kong University until the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong in 1941, during which he was interned in Stanley, Hong Kong, until 1945. After the war was over he returned to London and joined the Colonial Service. From 1953 to 1960 he was Principal of the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture in Trinidad.

So if Herklots did indeed write the *Hong Kong Countryside* from memory, from whence did these memories come?

NATURE JOTTINGS AND OTHERS

The only record that we can find linking Herklots to this a cutting from the *South China Morning Post* from 1937[7] which describes the wild dogs of Hong Kong in greater depth. The main weight of the article is about a mysterious creature shot near 'Shumchun' in the New Territories. This is presumably a reference to somewhere along the Sham Chun River, which had been Anglicised rather incorrectly.

Wild dogs which seem like wolves

Having more or less disposed of the human-eating tiger scare of last week, I am afraid that those who like to be thrilled (and those, of course, who like to thrill others) will be disappointed to find me again pouring cold water on a fierce wild-animal story. This time it is the alleged wolf killed near Shumchun not long ago. The animal, it is learned, was not: it weighed not much over 100 pounds – which is underweight for a full-sized wolf.

The truth is that no wolves occur in this part of China, and the animals that were much resembling them, noticed from time to time in the New Territories, are really wild dogs. In scientific natural history, a sharp distinction is drawn between the wolf and the dog, just as there is between the sheep and the goat. The creature shot at Shumchun was not one of these wild dogs, or dholes, as they are known in India. The species found in South China is *Cuon rutilans*. It is a beast much like an Alsatian of middling size, it has a rather reddish brown coat. It does not attack human beings for prey, and is therefore not feared by the Chinese peasants (who I am sure would never mistake one for a tiger).

The last one this scribe saw "with his own eyes" was a solitary specimen ranging the vicinity of Lion Rock. Reports have come in from readers of this column from time to time of sighting these wild dogs, either singly or in pairs – but never, apparently, in anything resembling a pack. Some years ago I thought they were wolves, basing my belief on hearsay, but have since learned from the best authority that a wild wolf is practically unknown in Kwangtung.

By the way, if anyone obtains a freshly killed dhole, it would be welcomed, probably with open arms, by Dr. Herklots, at the university; or failing the complete carcase, the skin would be appreciated.

The author of this article, is somebody naming themselves 'Vinjar', which is - apparently -[8] a rather uncommon Norwegian surname, and also a given name. Its derivation is from the Old Norse for vineyard[9].

'Vinjar'[10], was a pseudonym adopted by Vincent Jarrett who was a contributor to several Hong Kong newspapers in the 1930s and 1940s sometimes using the pseudonym of 'Colonial', usually writing about Hong Kong history[11]. Coincidentally Herklots and Jarrett were both interned at Stanley Prison Camp during WW2. It is not known how well the two men knew each other, but it would appear, after a superficial examination at least. That Jarrett's writings were of a more popularist and less academic vein than those of Herklots.

But the article *does* give us some interesting information. The animal shot near 'Shumchun' was not much over a 100lb in weight. 'Vinjar' notes that this is "underweight for a small sized wolf"[13].

'Vinjar' is actually wrong about this, because writing in 2004 Mech & Boitani noted these weights for *Canis lupus* - males averaging 43–45 kg (95–99 lb), and females 36–38.5 kg (79–85 lb)[14]. He was also technically wrong when he says that there are no wolves in China[15]. There are actually two sub species of *C. lupus* and the closely related *C. himalayensis*, (the specific identity of which is disputed)[16].

When one begins to look there are actually quite a few references to wild dogs in the archives. The early Victorian naturalists were aware of the wild dogs of southern China but the specific identity of the animals was open to debate. Writing in 1856 Hamilton Smith stated:

> "The Red Wild Dog of Southern China is most likely another race or sub-species of Chryseus. The animal is described as resembling the Dingo of Australia, though somewhat lower on the legs; but whether this or the Beluch wants the second tubercular tooth, is not ascertained." [17]

Chryseus appears to be an obsolete pseudonym for *Cuon alpinus* [18]

Hamilton Smith goes on to say that wolves were also found in the region:

> "In China, wolves abound in the Province of Xantung (sic= Kwantung?) but how far they are found to the south is not known" [19]

In 1996 one of the present wrote to veteran zoologist, the late Clinton Keeling on the matter and received the following letter dated July 18th 1996:

> "I'd say the possibility of Wolves in Hong Kong as recently as the end of the last century is absolutely nil. The only wolf found in Southern Asia is the so-called Indian Wolf (*Canis lupus pallipes*) which has been recorded no further east than Szechwan over the last two centuries. The Golden Jackal (Canis aureus) used to extend to Southern China as recently as the 19th Century, and this has often been taken for a Wolf by non-naturalists." [20]

This opens up a further conundrum. The golden jackal is currently found no further west than Myanmar. [21] The word 'jackal' however seems to be widely misused in contemporary Chinese sources. One image of a 'golden jackal' discovered by the present authors [22] is actually a painting of a peculiarly yellow coloured racoon dog (*Nyctereutes procyonoide*).

There is a report from 1905[23] by G. N. Orme writing about the time when the Kowloon-Canton Railway was being built, which refers to wolves in the New Territories.

> A few small wolves still survive among the hills occasionally descending to commit depredations in the farm yards

In 1913 G.A Bunbury[24] described a species of wild dog, to whom he assigned the Chinese name Chai kau which was: "Seen on Kowloon Hills, San-kui, etc. Size of large retriever colour brown. Seen mostly in autumn and winter".

In 1921 'Vinjar' writes:

> "After being described successively as a bear, a lion, an elephant, a kangaroo and a "beast that never was", the Kowloon "tiger" has, following an untimely death, turned out to be a lone wolf. He was last seen prowling about the vicinity of the Chun Lung village, his preference for succulent pigs bringing about his downfall. With one accord, the villagers, who had witnessed with great mortification the havoc he created amongst the herds, rose in arms against the invader, and slew him amidst jubilant cries of "hai-yah". The wolf proved to be a fine animal, weighing some thirty catties. There are, however, still those who think that this is not THE Kowloon "tiger", it being pointed out that Chun Lung is quite a long distance from Hok Un, where the strange animal was last seen." [25]

Writing in 1925, R.C Hurley notes:

> "As regards fauna, among the groups of boulders and in some of the thicker undergrowth, small packs of jackals may occasionally be seen making off when disturbed, at great pace; foxes also and several smaller kinds of the feline species, one of them quite a big specimen." [26]

Although jackals are, and were, found across much of the former British Empire, Keeling stated [27] that they were extinct in China by the 20th Century, and it is logical, we believe, to hypothesise that Hurley is merely using the term to describe a wild canid distinct from the local race of the fox *V. Vulpes hoole*.

In 1932, in an article entitled 'Birds and Beasts of Hong Kong' Herklots himself wrote: "Wolves are apparently resident here and have been seen frequently in the Sheung Shui district and occasionally on the Fanling golf course." [28]

So far all these different wild dogs have been recorded from parts of the New Territories. In 1939 we have an account of wild dogs on Hong Kong Island itself:

> "Encountered by Residents Above Happy Valley. Attacks Made On Pets. An encounter with a pack of wild dogs which are known to be haunting some of the hills of the Colony was the experience of Mr R.H.Charles, the proprietor of the Hong Kong Riding School, who, with the trainer for Mr Li Po-chun, was out riding yesterday morning on the hills over Sir Cecil Clementi's Ride above the Au Par Mansions. The couple met a pack of seven dogs when crossing a big expanse of grass land. Two of the pack detached themselves from the others and savagely attacked a bull terrier and spaniel belonging to Mr Charles who was 25 yards away at the time. Galloping back Mr Charles took a stirrup from his pony and drove the dogs away. The dogs appeared to be Alsatian and were very defiant. They followed Mr Charles who was leading his two dogs, almost back to the riding school." [29]

The year after, only six months till the Japanese invasion, a pack of wild dogs was reported to be "active in the Pokfulam district" and several attacks had been made on domestic livestock. These appear to be the same pack of dogs described above, which had been monitored, for several years, in different parts of the island.

> "A pack of dogs living in a wild state were first reported a little over two years ago in the Tytam area, and since then complaints of their ravages in Deep Water Bay and Little Hongkong vicinities have been made been made from time to time, leading to efforts by the Police to deal with the animals. So far, they appear not to be a menace to human beings: the leader of the pack was observed to be an Alsatian which must of strayed and taken to the hills, and the pack numbering 7, appeared half-wild. The true wild dog of South China does not occur on the island of Hongkong". [30]

The following day 'Vinjar' commented on the story in his weekly 'Nature Jottings' column for the *South China Morning Post*. In which he confirmed that he had first seen a "wolf-like" dog in a stream bed at Wong Nai Chung Gap on February 2nd 1938. However, when one refers to his original account he mentions nothing about a pack, but says that: "There seem, indeed, to have been two of these animals, but only one was seen at a time." [31]

He then goes on to contradict himself and suggest that the animal he encountered at Wong Nai Chung Gap might have been a dhole rather than a feral dog resembling an Alsatian. He also claimed that there was empirical evidence that these dogs had been feeding on muntjac, moving to new areas whenever they had exhausted the supplies available,

But then he goes on to claim that wolves, *C. l. laniger* which is now accepted as an 1847 synonym for the specifically contested Tibetan wolf, whilst another synonym which has also appeared in the literature reviewed in this paper, *tschiliensis* dates from 1907, [32] "occasionally wander into the New Territories". [33]

This is the first record that we have come across which categorically alleges the presence of this species in Hong Kong, and the first allegation of wolves in Hong Kong since 1905. Furthermore, this completely contradicts what he had written a year earlier, and indeed what he had written in 1933 when he claimed:

> "There is, definite evidence that an animal answering to the description, of a wolf, occurs in the Colony, but it is probably in reality the large wild dog, of somewhat reddish colour, reported rather commonly from Kwangtung and elsewhere in South China, *Cyon (Cyon) lepturus*. The true wolves do not range much below Central. China: the Chinese species being *Canis lupus var. tschiliensis*, very little different from the Wolves of Central and North Asia: and Europe.
>
> This wild dog may be taken as another definite addition to our list of local fauna. The distinction between these animals and the true wolves is that the dogs have only two pairs of molars in the lower jaw, whereas wolves have three." [34]

'Vinjar' ends his article by again claiming that dholes were found in the territory:

> "There is a genuine wild dog that is seen sometimes in the New Territories, but which appears to hunt only in mated couples and not in packs. It is known scientifically as *Cuon rutilans*: size about that of an undersized chow with rather reddish coat".

We have written elsewhere[35] about the mysterious shooting of a tiger in 1942 on Stanley Peninsula but a perusal of the diaries of some of the internees reveal the appearance of other strange animals in the vicinity at the same time. The diary of L.A. Searle, Superintendent of Police at Stanley, (M.S.Ind.Ocn. S.76(1) dated May 29th 1942[36], says there was a gaunt (or giant) dog in the camp at the same time as *two* tigers and *two* cubs.

The Second World War changed Hong Kong forever, as it did so much of the world, and it seems oddly fitting that the history of wild dogs in the region also comes to an end at this time. Only, of course, it doesn't, When two of the authors were children in Hong Kong during the 1960s there was at least one pack of feral dogs on Victoria Peak, and a brief look at the Hong Kong Biodiversity Database shows that "Abandoned pet dogs in the wild; the pelage varied from white, brown or black with various sizes and colours of patches; the muzzle is long with large and erect ears" are common and "widely distributed in urban and countryside areas throughout Hong Kong".[37] And stories of wild dogs [38, 39] are as rife now as they were eighty years ago when they were chronicled by Herklots and Jarrett.

But what exactly were they?

We started this investigation hoping to find empirical evidence to support Herklots' assertion that dholes once lived in Hong Kong. Sadly, we found only the words of an amateur naturalist who wrote a weekly column for the local newspaper. What we were not expecting to find were suggestions that wolves were once found in Hong Kong, and we feel – despite the evidence that we have presented – that it would be unwise to claim the historical existence of wolves, or jackals, in Hong Kong on the basis of this scant evidence. But, we believe, it would be equally unwise to categorically deny their historical existence as well.

But something once lived there, and although logic dictates that these may well have been dholes, the available evidence suggests that there were more than one type of wild canid in Hong Kong in the early parts of the 20th Century.

We spoke briefly about the Eurasian golden jackal earlier. This species has been the centre of a number of conundra in recent years. The specific identity of the 'jackals' of Africa was thrown into doubt of a series of discoveries in the early 21st Century. In December 2002 a specimen from Eritrea was shown to have many wolf-like qualities[40], and nine years later in 2011 it was claimed that all African 'golden jackal' populations were actually specialised grey wolves[41]. Four years later the animal was redefined as a distinct species: the African golden wolf [42]. As a result of all this the current authors and others have been revaluating the specific identity of an obscure Hungarian cryptid – the reed wolf. The information we have unearthed during the preparation of this paper would suggest that more work also needs to be done on the historical canids of southern China. Because as recent events in Europe [43, 44] have shown, wild canids are prone to recolonising land from which they have been absent for decades, even centuries, if there is a valid biological reason for them to do so.

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The Curious Case of Britain`s Coin Anomalies

Richard Muirhead

You might question the sanity of someone who walks up to you, totally sober and informs you that not only have ancient Chinese artefacts turned up in Britain and Ireland but also in the United States, Canada and Australia. But I am about to do just that! I am a Fortean by profession , that is to say a follower of Charles Fort (1874 - 1932) the iconoclast and philosopher described as the "the man who invented the supernatural" by his biographer Jim Steinmeyer. He may as well be described as the man who made the research into very anomalous events respectable for the first time. Not that I am for a moment suggesting that there is a direct link between metal detecting and the supernatural, but what I am suggesting, as a Fortean, is that anomalies exist in almost all walks of life, including British and Irish history and this has been confirmed by metal detector users and archaeologists themselves; to the extent that the orthodox history of the British Isles, that I was taught at preparatory school and elsewhere, should be seriously reconsidered and possibly re-written. The purpose of this essay is to persuade you, the metal detectorist that you can play a small part in re-writing history! If you find the word "supernatural" as unpalatable as a cold and out of season mince pie then replace it with "anomalous" and view Fort and myself as iconoclasts in the true meaning of the word. I mean I intend to shake up orthodox history by suggesting that the conventional wisdom of Britain, Ireland and the United States being first of all inhospitable wastelands of cold tundra inhabited by nobody, then populated by bear-skin clad savages accompanied only by mammoths and sabre-toothed cats, can be disproven by twenty-first century metal detector users whether just coin or artefact hunters or treasure seekers. Perhaps other races and nations have visited Britain other than Britons, Celts, Romans ,Saxons ,Vikings and Normans. In fact, according to The Chronicle of the Early Britons (Brut y Brittaniat) the reason why Britain is so called is because a group of refugees under the leadership of a man called Brutus arrived here after the military and political repercussions of the Trojan War (in modern Hisarlik, Turkey)

in the 13th or 12th Centuries B.C. An alternative history of the British Isles would include visitors from the Orient, Phoenicia, ancient Israel and Egypt too. It has been said by some that the Phoenicians traded with Cornwall two thousand years ago and earlier for tin. This country or Spain was known as Tarshish in ancient times. Herodotus called Great Britain the Tin Islands as early as 445 B.C. According to a correspondent of mine, Richard Colborne, archaeologists in the Barnsley area of Yorkshire have found, a few years ago, mummies embalmed in a manner identical to that carried out by ancient Egyptians. Also Roman and Egyptian artefacts from around 30 B.C. have been found in various parts of Yorkshire. These date from the alliance between Cleopatra VII and Mark Anthony. Surely this might interest a metal detector user enough to explore further? On November 25th 2017 the Daily Express website reported the research of historian Malcolm Hutton who investigated links between ancient Egypt and ancient Britain and Ireland. Also: " In 1939 the hulls of two ancient ships were discovered in Ferriby in the Humber Estuary but because of the outbreak of World War Two no research on them was carried out at the time. However, they have since been raised and examined, and the study revealed they were of the type used by Egyptians. They have been radio-carbon dated, placing them at around 1400 to 1350BC." (1)

According to orthodox history the first Chinese person to visit Great Britain was Shen Fu Tsong, a Jesuit scholar who visited England in 1685 and catalogued the Chinese collection in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. However this is where things get very interesting. In September 2016 it was reported that the skeleton of an Oriental person was discovered in a Roman grave in Shoreditch, London, dating from the 2nd to the 4th Century A.D. Was he or she a traveller or merchant who had come to Britain along the Silk Road?

The "dead and dusty hand" of historical orthodoxy cannot explain how or why a metal detecting enthusiast turned up a Twelfth century A.D. Chinese coin (Fig.1)

from the Song Dynasty near Chester in 2014. A similar coin was found on the beach at Colwyn Bay in North Wales in 2013 and in a field in North Wales in 2014, according to a member of the Metal Detecting Forum website. Someone called Silver Shark on the same forum said that he/she had found three similar Chinese cash coins in Northern Ireland. Dr Caitlin Green on her History, Archaeology, Lec-

-tectors and Seminars blog of March 31st 2018 commented on the Vale Royal, Cheshire Chinese coin find mentioned above:

"The coin in question was found in the Vale Royal area of Cheshire and has been identified by the British Museum as a cast copper alloy Chinese coin from the Northern Song dynasty (AD 960–1127), minted during the Xining reign period of Emperor Shenzong of Song between 1068 and 1077. Curiously, it appears to be a unique find from Britain - 40 individual Chinese coins and one hoard are recorded on the Portable Antiquities Scheme, but only this eleventh-century example is of medieval date, with all of the other 146 Chinese coins being minted between the mid-seventeenth and early twentieth centuries."

According to the Anglo – Celt newspaper of October 7th 1944 a Chinese coin dating from 1243 A.D. was found in County Monaghan in the northern part of the Irish Republic. According to the Archaeological Journal, volume 5 1848, citing a Memoir on Irish Antiquities by Governor Pownall, Archaeologia, vol vii, plate xviii, p. 169, a Chinese cash coin, of the round type with a square circle in the middle was found in 1783 in a bog in Allenstown, County Meath. Gavin Menzies wrote in his book `1421 The Year China Discovered The World` about huge Chinese ships travelling far away from China with people and animals on board. Maybe Chinese coins from on board the vessels somehow got as far as Ireland?

The anomalist William Corliss (1926 - 2011) collected data on anomalous coins in North America as follows: · Chinese coin found in British Columbia Canada, reported in 1884· Chinese coin in an Alaskan burial, reported in 1892. Charles Fort mentions in his `Book of the Damned` (he was referring to "damned data" , that is, stories rejected by mainstream scientists, archaeologists, etc for being too anomalous or random to consider seriously) a Roman coin brought up to the surface from thirty feet below in September 1833 in Norfolk, Virginia. He also refers to a report in the Scientific American of June 17th 1882 of a bronze coin of King Antiochus Epiphanes IV found in Illinois. Fort also mentions a Roman coin discovered in a mound in Illinois in early 1913.

According to the American magazine Treasure (volume 10 number 11 , December 1979) in the mid 1920s Roman remains, including parts of swords, were found in Arizona. Also, according to a letter from Jess Richards of Birmingham, Alabama in volume 3, number 4, Winter 1977 of Treasure Found! magazine, this correspondent found, presumably with a metal detector although Jess did not specifically say so, ancient Roman and Greek coins on the East Coast of the United States. The editor, R.M.F. replied thus:

"Some historians and American archaeologists believe that we have been visited by a number of ancient cultures. Traces of Oriental, Roman, Greek ,Egyptian and Phoenician artifacts have been dug in both North and South America. Archaeology has already established that the Vikings planted colonies on the East Coast of America, and this has made an impact on text books that deal with United States history."

In the volume 9, number 1, Spring 1983 issue of Treasure Found! Peter McArthur of Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, wrote to say he had found a coin from Byzantium five inches below the surface of the ground, at a place called Windsor in Nova Scotia. Byzantium was a kingdom or territory that later became Constantinople then Istanbul in modern Turkey. How it reached modern Canada is a mystery.

It seems that, in the 1970s at least, "treasure hunting" and "metal detecting" were used almost as synonyms in this American magazine. On October 30th 2011 the Epoch Times web site reported that a Chinese coin more than three hundred years old had been found in the Yukon territory of Canada at a proposed site for a mine. In Australia, in August 2014 it was reported that an ancient Chinese coin was found by a metal detector user (a member of a group called the Past Masters) on Elcho Island in northern Australia, dating from the Qing Dynasty between 1736 and 1795.

Of course the flaw in my argument is that these coins may have been lost much more recently by a modern collector. One way of validating such ancient metal artefact anomalies is to ascertain how much soil is produced per annum. According to one web site of the Soil Science Society of America in 2013 (3) it takes five hundred to a thousand years to create an inch of soil. However soil erosion needs to be considered, according to an U.K government`s Defra (Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) web site

a thousand years to create an inch of soil. However soil erosion needs to be considered, according to an U.K government`s Defra (Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) web site based upon a 2009 – 2010 research project, peat shrinkages in Eastern England of 1 – 2cm per annum have been recorded. So on the whole most finds of coins or other metal artefacts ,even ones hundreds of years old, should be found close to the surface as soil accumulation and erosion seem to cancel each other out, unless the object has been deliberately buried deep below ground surface or flood and catastrophic changes in the landscape have combined to bury the coin(s) far under the surface.

The saga of the Chinese porcelain chops in Ireland dates from the Eighteenth to Early Twentieth Centuries , after which the story goes cold. Between 1780 and 1924 fifty "chops" or seals were found scattered all over Ireland , both the Republic and the North in apparently as diverse a place as the roots of a tree , a bog, a field etc. An extensive account was written in Notices of Chinse Seals found in Ireland` by Edmund Getty (Dublin: Hodges and Smith, 1850) These seals dated as far back in time as the 6th Century B.C. the time of Confucius.

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Rains of Animals in Spain

Javier Resines

Animal rains are a relatively frequent phenomenon in Spain since time immemorial. The cases are piled up by dozens and are especially well documented since the late nineteenth century. Toads, quails, fish, insects ... All kinds of animals have been the protagonists of these strange rains. Usually, these rains are composed of animals of only one species. Although, sometimes and as we will see, several species are dragged by the same storm and fall on the ground at the time.

Fall frogs and toads from the sky!

The rains of batrachians are particularly abundant in the Spanish skies. Frogs and toads of different species and sizes have been protagonists of these curious precipitations. The first case documented in modern times is described in the scientific journal Nature. On page 378 it mentions how in 1915 a gigantic cloud of batrachians formed by millions of these small creatures, was poured over Gibraltar. The same rain occurred in May 1921. The London Evening Standard reported - in its issue of the 21st that thousands of frogs fell on the rock and surrounding area. All were alive and jumped "in a state of great excitement," according to witnesses

The librarian and local history expert Juana Santana Díaz has compiled interesting cases of rains of frogs in the town of San Vicente de Alcántara, province of Cáceres. Thus, in 1932 there was a curious phenomenon in the skies of the town.

Fig 1 Rain of fish

—De San Fernando nos dan cuenta en la siguiente carta, fecha 25, de un hecho curioso:

«Un aceso extraordinario ha acontecido anoche en esta ciudad.

Serian las nueve y media, hora en que llovia á torrentes, cuando una inundacion de codornices se desplomó sobre la poblacion y en particular á los alrededores de la estacion del ferro-carril y playa del cuartel de infantería de marina.

Baste decir que ha habido soldado que en ménos de media hora ha recojido 30 docenas entre vivas y muertas, y no exajero nada si digo que el número de las que se cree se hayan cojido no baja de 15.000.

Los ranchos de la tropa de hoy tanto de marina como del ejército han sido de codornices, y á pesar de esto, no hay persona de la poblacion que no tenga en su casa unas cuantas vivas.

En esta localidad se han vendido tres por dos cuartos, y en Cádiz, para donde han llevado muchas, se vendian á seis cuartos el par.

Se cree que este fenómeno haya consistido en que siendo en la actualidad el paso de las codornices para el Africa, y estando lloviendo constantemente desde hace cuatro dias, irian cansadas, y por tanto, con el fuerte aguacero de anoche hayan caido fatigadas con la columna de agua que las arrastraba.»

Fig 2 Rain of quail in San Fernando (1872)

From the zone of the square and in a northerly direction, it was possible to contemplate two great clouds of a very peculiar golden colour. Between them a horizontal whirlpool began to form. After turning for a few minutes, the whirlpool took on the appearance of a "wooden beam" shaped like a cigar.

More than half an hour later, the golden clouds and the whirlpool disappeared as they were covered by common storm clouds. The rain fell heavily on the town and the surrounding area and they quickly realized that thousands of toads were falling from the sky and running happily along the ground. The largest number of batrachians was found on the road between Alcántara and Cáceres and on the Corredera, now converted into a main square. People have not forgotten how the next day, peasant cars were gutting frogs in their path, since it was practically impossible to dodge them.

Between 1932 and 1944 the same spectacle was repeated at least on three other occasions, with significant rain of water and hail that filled the town and the countryside with small toads, although sometimes large frogs, locusts and mosquitoes that expelled a scent fell from the sky. nauseating.

In mid-May 1954, something similar happened in the town of Sanlúcar de Barrameda in Cadiz. One of the witnesses, the priest Juan Francisco López, director of the Diocesan Ecclesiastical Institute Our Lady of the Kings, narrated what he could remember when he was still a child: *"At that time I was a student of this center that nowadays I direct, and I remember perfectly that waterspout and frogs that fell on the school and the cultivation area known as Monte Algaide. Several dozens of students witnessed this singular rain.* "

A little more than a decade later, specifically in the year 1966, a rain of small toads sowed bewilderment among the inhabitants of neighboring Malaga. Both that afternoon and the next day, the children enjoyed playing with such nice animals.

The newspapers of the time also picked up an unusual rain of frogs that occurred at the beginning of June of 1960 in neighbouring Morocco, in the middle of a violent storm that left two dead in its step.

More recent and mediatic was the rain of frogs that happened in Cold of Albarracín (Teruel) in the year 1988. The mayor of the locality, Benito Lacasa, remembers that "that rain affected all the town. I remember that not only frogs fell, small, almost tadpoles, but that the strange tornado was accompanied by hail. We asked ourselves a thousand questions about the origin of such a rain. " A strange rain that made headlines in the local newspapers for several days.

The last related event in Spain with batrachian rains occurred in 2007, when small frogs were precipitated in the village of El Rebolledo, in the province of Alicante.

The quails that fell from on high

If frogs are common in the casuistry of animal rains, birds occupy another prominent place. In Spain, however, a singularity occurs. The rains of birds that are recorded are not any kind of bird. All have a common protagonist: the quail (Coturnix coturnix)

On September 25, 1872, a large number of quail fell on San Fernando (Cádiz). Curiously, the animals served as food for the troops of the army of land and navy quartered in the city, as reported by the newspaper "The Talk" dated four days later. Apparently, the soldiery hurried to collect the thirty dozen quails that fell from the sky in less than half an hour.

A few years later, in June 1880, another rain of these birds fell on Valencia (a fact that was repeated in 1906) although more important were those that took place in Bilbao and Madrid at the beginning of the 20th century.

On the night of September 23 to 24, 1906, an intense shower of quail took place in the capital of Bizkaia, which filled the streets, many of them being entangled in telephone and telegraph cables. Only three days later there was another similar rain, bringing joy to many locals who did not hesitate to collect these birds with the intention of eating them.

A year later, on September 7, 1907, the Madrid sky was covered with threatening storm clouds. The rain began to fall on the surroundings of the downtown Royal Palace and, mixed with it a great amount of quail were flattened against the ground. The waterspout, which lasted a few minutes, left the adjacent plaza full of hundreds of corpses of these birds. Again, the poor animals were the main dish of the banquets of some hungry citizens.

What explanation is there for this unusual amount of rainfall of this animal? The quail (*Coturnix coturnix*), is a migratory bird that travels twice a year the distance that separate its nesting sites in Central Europe, southern Scandinavia, British Isles and the Mediterranean from those wintering in the north of the African continent.

Fig 3 Plaza de Oriente (Madrid) at the beginning of the s. XIX

They usually make these migration trips in quite numerous flocks. In September there arrives the first cold air masses coming from the north that collide with the warm layers of the Mediterranean area.

This clash of air masses usually causes great storms on the Iberian Peninsula. . In this situation of atmospheric instability, any small animal (the quail measures about 15 centimeters and does not weigh more than 100 grams) is susceptible to being lifted by the air and thrown violently at a great distance.

Flying fishes and other bugs

Rains of fish are usually the most common (within the strangeness that this phenomenon is) within the Fortean casuistry. In Spain, however, there are few examples of this, against the usual that happens in other parts of the world.

In addition, they tend to occur in combination with other types of animals, rarely alone. This happened in Granollers (Barcelona) - in a case without date - in which the witness, a farmer originally from Montgat named Joan Ribet, recalls how in his youth he witnessed an unusual shower of fish, frogs and insects. After the storm, the ground was completely covered by a thick layer of mud of thirty centimeters. The explanation given was that a waterspout had absorbed water from some swamp and dropped it on the city.

Insects, as on this occasion, we have seen that they also fell in the 30s and 40s of the 20th century on the Extremaduran town of San Vicente de Alcántara. And something even more unusual was what was observed by the astonished witnesses of the Huelva town of Huelva in 1989. The researcher José Manuel Vela echoed an

unusual case of snail rain that occurred on this town. The witnesses, two families who were driving by car along the road that connects this town with Seville, were surprised at night by an intense downpour that made it impossible to continue the trip. They stopped for dinner at a restaurant and, after replenishing their strength, set off on their way back home at half past midnight.

It was still raining violently and they began to notice strong blows against the front glass. They thought it was hail but their surprise was huge when they discovered that a huge amount of snails were crushed against the windshield. They stopped to see what happened. As far as they could see, the road and field were full of thousands of snails of all sizes, some alive and others smashed to the ground. A strange vision one would never forget.

Why do animals fall from the sky?

The most usual explanation tells us that the cause is in an atmospheric phenomenon similar to a tornado. Cumulonimbus-type clouds cause heavy rain, causing hot air to rise, trapping small objects and animals that subsequently discharge as a storm.

The force of the air is able to raise these animals that are usually found on the surface of rivers, ponds or in the sea. Animals are not usually moved for a long time or a long distance, except on rare occasions, so in many cases they survive the trip.

These rotating columns rotate from bottom to top and once the objects or animals enter it the process of precipitation causes them to come out of them and fall. This hypothesis is reaffirmed by the type of animals that are draged up in these rains: small and light, usually from aquatic environments, such as frogs and fish.

Despite the rationality of this explanation, around these phenomena have appeared the most strange theories: from a divine punishment or prize to extraterrestrial interference, passing through the existence of interdimensional anomalies by which these animals would appear in our world.

Charles Fort, author of this last hypothesis of teleportation, also speculated on the existence of a celestial sea of the Sargasso, something like an air deposit that sucks and spits out objects and animals.

Weird theories for some explainable facts from our scientific knowledge, but that lack valid arguments for some aspects of the phenomenon. Let's see.

Usually, in each rain of animals we find only one species at a time, almost never mixing with others or including algae, other plants or objects. The transport mechanism selects a single species of fish or frog in a way that is difficult to explain, instead of sweeping everything in its path.

This situation could be explained more easily in the case of birds, if the tornado crosses a particular flock that is in mid-flight, especially in times of migrations, as we have analyzed in the case of quail.On the other hand, these rains are not always preceded by storms and almost never occur along with whirlwinds. Sometimes it is a gentle drizzle or even the precipitation of animals occurs with clear skies.

On the other hand, if the animals are supposed to be accompanied by rain, how is it explained that the tornadoes leave the absorbed animals between the clouds and that they remain indeterminate in them without falling? And that, in spite of the force that the whirlwinds have, the animals fall in perfect condition in many of the strange rains?

S 3 DE JUNIO DE 1960. EDICION DE ANDALUCIA. PAGINA 32.

de la que sólo se sabe contaba cuarenta y ocho años de edad y estaba casada con el súbdito español José María Castañer Llopart, domiciliado en la Ciudad Condal, y del que, al parecer, está separada desde hace diez años.—CIFRA.

UN MUERTO Y DOS HERIDOS GRAVES AL DERRUMBARSE UN ANDAMIO

Zaragoza 2. Un obrero muerto, otros dos heridos graves y tres más leves resultaron, en la tarde de hoy, al derrumbarse un andamio de unas obras en la calle de Morata.

El muerto era Antonio Serrano Pascual, de veintidós años, soltero, el cual se hallaba cumpliendo el servicio militar. Los heridos graves son Jesús Moreno Sánchez, de veintiséis años, casado, domiciliado en Zaragoza, y Mariano Moya, domiciliado en el barrio de San Juan de Mozarrifar.—CIFRA.

LA AYUDA ESPAÑOLA A LOS DAMNIFICADOS CHILENOS

Lluvia de ranas en Marruecos

Dos personas resultaron muertas por un rayo

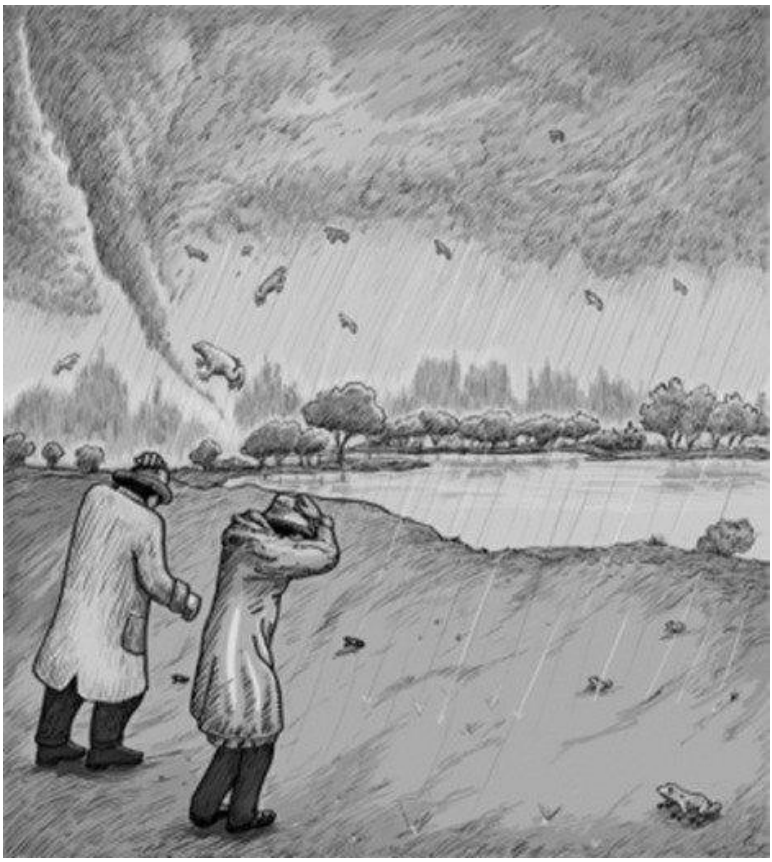
Tánger 2. La población de Sidi Kaen, centro petrolífero de Marruecos, se ha visto sorprendida por una extraña lluvia de ranas, particularmente copiosa durante una tormenta, en las calles de la ciudad, que antes habían sido barridas por un fortísimo temporal. Se han recogido millares de batracios.

Los vientos huracanados y las tormentas han proseguido en gran parte del país durante las últimas veinticuatro horas. En un aduar de Mequínez un rayo ha causado la muerte a una mujer marroquí, de treinta años, y a su hijo de doce, cuando se encontraban en el campo.—EFE.

Fig 4 Rain of frogs in Morocco (1960)

Questions unanswered for many of the cases. Questions that do nothing but feed hypotheses away from scientific explanations to use. We, for our part, while we find the answer to the strange phenomenon of the rain of animals, we will continue to look at the sky to avoid the possible fall of frogs or quails on our heads. - - - - -

Photos: 1. Rain of fish. Recorded from the s. XVI 2. Rain of quail in San Fernando (1872) 3. Plaza de Oriente (Madrid) at the beginning of the s. XIX 4. Rain of frogs in Morocco (1960) 5. Representation of a rain of frogs



. Fig 5. Representation of a rain of frogs

Rock Dogs and Top - End Tigers

Michael Williams and Rebecca Lang

Deep in the jungles of Queensland's pristine wilderness lurks a mysterious animal that is believed to be some kind of marsupial cat, one that could conceivably be a relative of *Thylacoleo carnifex* or even the *Thylacine* – that is, if anyone can prove it exists at all.

The ferocious striped Queensland Marsupial Tiger or 'yarri', as it is known in the local Aboriginal dialect, stalks the wilds of northern Queensland. Dwelling in caves and rocky outcrops shrouded in heavy forest, these 'rock dogs' hunt wallabies and harbour a savage reputation among northern Aboriginal tribes and early settlers who encountered them. The Queensland Tiger is different to the leopard and puma -like big cats discussed elsewhere in this book, primarily because early zoologists believed it could be some hitherto unidentified marsupial based on the strong field observations published in early zoological journals. In other words, it appeared to be a step away from scientific authentication.

The Queensland Tiger made its first documented appearance in 1871 in the Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London, and was later included in Frank W. Lane's Nature Parade– (1939), and Ellis Troughton's zoological bible Furred Animals of Australia– (1941), but despite the official references, there were no photographs and no specimens had ever been examined by a museum to verify its existence.

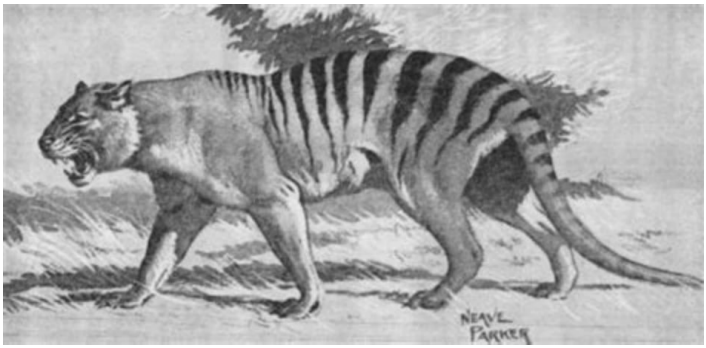


Fig 1 The Queensland Tiger

In earlier editions of his book, Troughton, who was also a respected curator from the Australian Museum, observed: “The failure of observers to obtain any parts of the hide, hair, skull, or teeth, casts much doubt over the reports of such an animal in Queensland.” More than 60 years later, the status quo remains.

Troughton and Lane had sourced their information from a much earlier 1926 zoological text, The Wild Animals of Australasia authored by zoologist Albert Sherbourne Le Souef and naturalist Henry Burrell–, which described the Queensland Tiger thus: “There exists in North Australia a large striped animal which has been aptly described as ‘a cat just growing into a tiger’. Though seen on many occasions, we

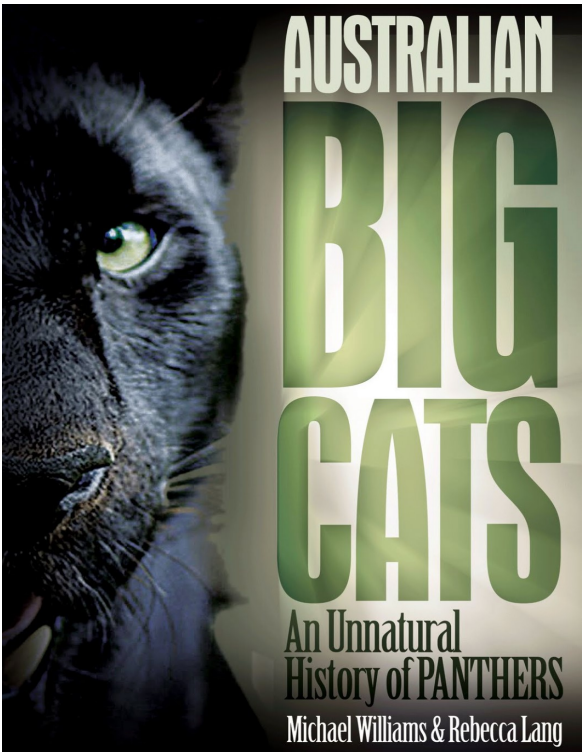


Fig 2. Michael Williams and Rebecca Lang`s book on Australian mystery cats

have not yet had a specimen in any of our museums.

"Hair short, rather coarse. General colour fawn or grey, with broad black stripes on flanks, not meeting over the back. Head like that of a cat; nose more pronounced. Ears sharp, pricked. Tail well haired, inclined to be tufted at end. Feet large, claws long, sharp. Total length about five feet, height at shoulder eighteen inches."

Witnesses also described the Queensland Tiger as being variously coloured yellow and black, a dirty fawn with broad black stripes, and dark orange with stripes. While the appearance varied, the accounts did seem to agree on one point – this 'Tiger' had attitude in spades and exhibited little fear of humans.

Brinsley Sheridan, a Police Magistrate based at Cardwell, wrote to zoologist P. L. Sclater with the following account about his son's harrowing experience in 1871 with a strange animal. The account was to be the first of many:

> "It was lying camped in the long grass and was as big as a native dog [dingo]; its face was round like that of a cat, it had a long tail, and its body was striped from the ribs under the belly with yellow and black. My dog flew at it, but it could throw him. The animal then ran up a leaning tree, and the dog barked at it. It then got savage and rushed down the tree at the dog and then at me. I got frightened and came home."

Several years later Norwegian explorer and naturalist Carl Lumholtz was slashing his way through the rainforests of the Herbert River region looking for new animal species. He lived with local Aborigines for almost a year from 1882-1883, and it was from them that he first heard about the Queensland Tiger:

> "I learned that on the summit of the Coast Mountains…there lived two varieties of mammals which seemed to me to be unknown to science. One of the animals they called *yarri*. From the description I conceived it to be a marsupial tiger. It was said to be about the size of a dingo, though its legs were shorter and its tail long, and it was described by the blacks as being very savage. If pursued it climbed up the trees, where the natives did not dare follow it, and by gestures they explained to me how at such times it would growl and bite their hands." [The other animal was the Lumholtz Tree Kangaroo (*Dendrolagus lumholtzi*), which the explorer subsequently discovered during the same trip.]

In 1909, G. de Tournoeur and P. B. Scougall were on horseback between Munna Creek and Tiaro when their horses shied upon seeing a striped 'cat'. They dismounted to get a better look at the animal, which had been feasting on a dead calf:

> "We…were startled to find a large animal of the cat tribe, standing about 20 yards away, astride of a very dead calf, glaring defiance at us, and emitting what I can only describe as a growling whine...he was nearly the size of a mastiff, of a dirty fawn colour, with a whiteish belly, and broad blackish stripes.

> "The head was round, with rather prominent lynx-like ears, but unlike that feline there were a tail reaching to the ground and large pads. We threw a couple of stones at him, which only made him crouch low, with ears laid flat, and emit a raspy snarl, vividly reminiscent of the African leopard's nocturnal 'wood-sawing' cry."

Timber-cutter Nigel Tutt and his brother Charlie were chopping down trees at the base of Mount Stanley, past Linville, in 1939-1940 when they encountered a 'big cat' with the markings of a tiger and a disposition to match:

> "The last thing we expected to see was any wild animal. There, sitting in the middle of an old decaying pine-stump, was a large 'Cat Animal'. The large feline apparition appeared to be relaxing in the warmth of a few rays of afternoon sun filtering through the scrub. We stopped about 20ft away.
>
> "This animal was big enough to be dangerous. It was certainly a cat. It didn't stand up to allow a really accurate guess of its height, but would perhaps have been a little taller than a large Blue Cattle dog, but much more heavily built. Its legs were about the thickness of a man's leg measured just below the knee. From what we could judge its body would be 40 inches (1.1m) or more around. Its coat was apparently of rather fine textured fur, reddish-ginger background with very dark brown, almost black, stripes all over its body and also circling its legs.
>
> "By this time we had come to believe our eyes. This animal was real. Its stripes and colouration were those of a tiger, though to my mind a little darker than tigers I had seen in circuses and zoos. Also, this animal seemed somewhat smaller than most 'African man-eaters' to be seen jumping through hoops of fire in the circus ring. Did some Indian tiger get fed up with his act while performing at some remote Brisbane Valley village and unceremoniously resign to make his way into the safety of the surrounding rainforest?"

In naturalist Charles Barrett's The Sunlit Land: Wandering in Queensland–, he recounts the experience of naturalist George Sharpe who examined the pelt of a striped animal that "measured five feet from nose to tail" shot by a farmer when it raided his goat yard. Unfortunately wild pigs had eaten the head and body, and the skin had started to rot.

Trying to divine just what kind of animal the Queensland Tiger may be is frequently complicated by the fact many old newspaper reports refer to sightings of, or the capturing of, a 'native cat', 'tiger cat' or 'tiger quoll' – all terms also used to refer to the Tiger or Spotted

Quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus*).

A case in point is Eric Howard's recollection about 'tiger cats' in Mount Tuchekoi in 1923 that were raiding chicken pens in the area. "These were the big native tiger cats, not the small spotted quolls. Photographs of this creature are rare indeed. 'Mac' Pearce of Noosaville, grandson of pioneer settlers of Mount Mee who came to the lower Kenilworth district in the early 1900s, had such a photograph - very small yet clear."– Howard, a native of Maleny, was of course referring to the Tiger or Spotted Quoll, not the Queensland Tiger. There are four Australian 'native cat' species, including the western, northern and eastern (thought to be extinct on the mainland but possibly making a comeback) quoll. The Tiger Quoll is the largest of the four. An unusual-looking marsupial carnivore, the quoll is not a cat at all, but its general appearance lends itself to the comparison. Its white-spotted coat ranges in colour from black through to a rich reddish brown, and its body shape could best be compared to a weasel.

The 'cryptid' Queensland Tiger is distinguished from its 'marsupial cousin' by dark brown/black thick-barred stripes, ranging in colour from fawn to a russet red, and a tufted tail – or so the eyewitness accounts inform us. However, as the lineage of the Marsupial Tiger is up for debate, it is possible the striped aboreal 'cat' could even be a form of giant quoll.

Perhaps the Tiger is already an animal already known to science, and the speculation of the past 130 years is a simple case of mistaken identity. Potential 'Tiger' candidates include the Spotted Cuscus (*Phalanger intercastellanus*) with its distinctive spotty white and russet pelt, and the Southern Common Grey Cuscus (*Phalanger intercastellanus*) – the cuscus resembles a cross between a monkey and a possum. Another possibility could be Lumholtz's Tree Kangaroo (*Dendrolagus lumholtzi*), but again, the dark brown colouration doesn't quite fit the Queensland Tiger's physical description

One of the stronger contenders is an animal that once ranged from the wilds of Papua New Guinea right across the Australian mainland down to Tasmania – the Tasmanian Tiger (*Thylacinus cynocephalus*). There are certainly some aspects of the witness descriptions that resonate with this species, now extinct, however the aboreal nature of the Queensland Tiger would appear to rule it out of contention. The Queensland Tiger-*Thylacine* theory was originally touched on by Troughton in a much later edition of his book Furred Animals of Australia (1965), and was later backed by Bernard Heuvelmans who wrote the Queensland Tiger was 'much more probably [a relict] of the supposedly extinct mainland form of thylacine'.

In more recent times the late Peter Chapple took up the cause, believing the aboreal nature of the Queensland Tiger referred to in witness reports was overstated or misreported. He argued the animal was a mainland *Thylacine*, but unfortunately Peter died before he was able to advance a more detailed case supporting his argument. Perhaps it is also worth entertaining the notion that the mainland *Thylacine* might have possessed an ability to climb trees, much in the same way some species of fox can manoeuvre their way up tree trunks. It might explain a lot.

Another avenue explored by researchers is the idea that the Queensland Tiger might actually be a living relative of *Thylacoleo carnifex*. Victor Albert, a molecular biologist, suggested the idea in 1987; he also supported the idea that the animal could be a short-faced mainland variant of the *Thylacine*. Going along with the Troughton-Heuvelmans-Chapple school of thought, it would seem more likely - ignoring the arboreal references for a moment, and given that the *Thylacine* was only officially declared extinct in 1986, and sightings of the animal are still being recorded - that the Queensland Tiger could represent a small pocket of surviving *Thylacines*.

Thylacine was only officially declared extinct in 1986, and sightings of the animal are still being recorded - that the Queensland Tiger could represent a small pocket of surviving *Thylacines*.

By way of comparison, *Thylacoleo carnifex* is believed to have died out 30-40,000 years ago…and yet the contentious aboreal nature of some of the reports also lends itself to supporting the theory that a relict population of marsupial lions could be hiding out in Queensland's sub-tropical wilderness.

Despite the lack of physical evidence, speculation continues as to what the Queensland Tiger might be – *Thylacoleo carnifex, Thylacine* or a new marsupial species altogether. One thing is certain; reports of the Queensland Tiger have dwindled significantly since the 1950s. Perhaps by the time we truly understand what animal is responsible for all of these sightings it may be too late.

**This article is an edited extract from a chapter on Queensland Tigers featured in Australian Big Cats: An Unnatural History of Panthers by Michael Williams & Rebecca Lang (Strange Nation Publishing, 2010). Used with permission of the authors.*

Carl Marshall
Animal Interment.

Vague reports describing foxes burying corpses of their own species have occasionally been interpreted as one animal giving the other a kind of meaningful burial. Foxes are known to engage with each other, sometimes fatally; there are also consistent reports of foxes feeding on the remains of other foxes. If we consider that these animals are well known to cache surplus food, the most likely explanation then for fox burials would seem to be the caching of a potential food resource rather than a burial ritual.
Badgers, on the other hand, are not known to cache food, although they will also sometimes feed on carrion. There are a handful of reports describing badgers moving the remains of other badgers, but these are rare and may actually indicate badgers dragging the carcass to a more secluded location to later feed on it. Even rarer are the accounts documenting multiple badgers co-operating in the burial of a member of the same species – the so-called badger "funerals". Usually, badgers show little interest in the remains of other badgers and seem disinclined to bury dead clan members, even their own cubs; however these reports tease us with the suggestion that something unusual and highly social is taking place in these rare instances. In most cases it is likely clan members are removing a corpse from the sett to prevent the spread of disease or the attraction of unwanted visitors, but there are some very rare examples showing highly ritualised behaviour that has so far defied scientific conclusion.

The act of burying one's dead is often regarded as a uniquely human trait, one of those behaviours that separate us from the animal kingdom. The idea that other species; even non human animals, may also bury their dead is not, however, a recent one. Pliny the Elder (AD 23 - 79) wrote that ants were the only animals, other than man, that buried their dead with funeral rites.

We now know that some ant species will bury any dead ants they come across, whether they're from their own colony or not, and that worker ants appear genetically programmed to continually remove dead and diseased ants from the nest.

Foxes are well known for digging up remains (even in an advanced state of decay!) be they of buried pets or, occasionally and rather macabrely, the corpses of humans, especially small children buried in paupers' graves. There are, however, occasional reports of foxes apparently dragging or even burying the remains of other foxes, and this has of course raised the question of whether they bury dead family members.

We know that foxes will kill other foxes, and on rare occasions may even cannibalise the remains, although this only really happens when conditions are extremely severe. Fights are relatively common among foxes, especially between males, but fights to the death are rare. A study by *Bristol University* found that only about 5% of foxes die as a result of combat with other foxes, most in winter during the midst of the breeding season. The few reports have suggested a carcass was either left where it fell or its fate was unknown. In a few cases, the corpses are presumably dragged away for consumption. There is one report of a fox dragging the lifeless body of another across a field in the middle of the afternoon, but the witness didn't see what happened to the dead fox. At present, it is impossible to do more than speculate that a fox may drag the body of another away to consume it in seclusion, away from potential scavengers.

In 1994, *University of Sussex* biologist Tim Roper published a paper in the *Journal of Zoology in which he summarised responses he received from a request for information on badgers seen dragging the remains of other badgers that he made to the Mammal Society*. Roper received four accounts of this behaviour: one involved a badger seen dragging a recently killed individual away from a roadside; the second described a sow taking the corpse of one of her cubs that had

been recently killed by a dog into a sett; the third told of a badger dragging the body of another across a field; and the fourth described how the observer found the remains of a dead badger lodged into the entrance of an active badger sett. There are also a few anecdotal literary reports that tell of skeletons having been found walled up in chambers within a sett, implying that if a badger dies below ground, it may be moved to a disused part of the sett and 'entombed'. Roper didn't receive any reports of badgers actually burying their own (it should also be noted that badgers were, and still are gassed inside their setts).

Ernest G. Neal and Chris Cheeseman, in their 1996 Poyser monograph *Badgers*, recounted the following:

"*It is certainly established that badgers will drag the body of a dead one for some distance. Bronwen Doncaster related how she saw a badger laboriously drag another across a road one February night. In spite of interruptions by passing cars, the badger persisted and eventually dragged the body up the far bank, where it was found the next morning. There is also an account by Joseph O'Kelly (from 1969) of a badger, killed by a car, being covered in leaves on two successive nights, presumably by badgers. The leaves had to be dragged some distance from a copse in order to do th*is."

To-date, there are only three literary reports that, if taken at face value, suggest almost funereal behaviour among badgers. The first is the fascinating and detailed account given by Brian Vezey-Fitzgerald in his 1942 book, *A Country Chronicle*. Vezey-Fitzgerald described events one June evening at his local badger sett, where a sow emerged just before 11pm and did something very unusual.

"*…suddenly, she raised her head to the heavens and uttered a cry – the first real sound I have ever heard from a badger. It was a weird cry, half whimper, half howl, shrill for so square a beast…*"

The author described how the nocturnal call was so eerie that the hairs on the back of his neck stood up on end. The sow moved rapidly to a nearby disused rabbit warren, where she proceeded to dig for just over an hour before returned to her sett. The sow reappeared again shortly afterwards, sniffing at the air and moving in an destressed manner

to the warren where digging continued – she made frequent trips back and forth, roughly every ten minutes. Vezey-Fitzgerald then told how an unknown male badger appeared at the sett and cautiously approached the female – what happened next is fascinating:

"*First the female, with a jerky, upward toss of the head and a swift downward movement until the nose touched the ground, uttered a thin, musical, whistling sound, rather as though the wind had been sharply expelled through the nostrils. The sound lasted – perhaps it was more of a squeak than a sound – just as long as it took the head to complete the motion described…*"

He continued:

"*At the same time she moved forward with two tiny jerky steps, the hairs of her back ruffling very quickly. The moment she stopped and was standing still with nose almost touching the ground, the male, stationed exactly opposite her, went through the same performance. I was unable to distinguish any difference between the sounds emitted by male and female, while the movements performed were exactly the same in both cases. As each animal came to the end of the act the other commenced afresh, until, finally, their noses appeared to be touching*."

Both badgers then retreated into the sett, with the sow leading the boar nose-to-tail, and after some time (it was now after 03:00) the two emerged dragging the corpse of a larger, old badger. The badgers were apparently so engrossed at this point that two loud sneezes from the observer failed to elicit any response. The boar and sow dragged the dead badger to the rabbit warren where they proceeded to bury it. With the burial complete there was no further performance and the male wandered off in the direction from which he came. Vezey-Fitzgerald closely examined the warren and noted that soil had been placed into the entrance and packed down by the two badgers; two days later, he dug out the earth and found the remains of an old, white-muzzled, male badger crammed clumsily into the hole.

Vezey-Fitzgerald's meticulous documentation unfortunately raises more questions than they answer. How had the young

male been summoned to help? Was he alerted by the sow's cry as it might seem? Did the female expect his arrival?

The second account was allegedly published in a paper by E. Hampton. It seems to have been published in the *Field Sports* journal of 1947, although there is much confusion about this. Nonetheless, although they don't recount it, according to Neal and Cheeseman, Hampton observed a similar event to that which Vezey-Fitzgerald described, with the common factors in both accounts being that a hole was dug, the corpse was dragged into it by more than one badger, and caringly covered with soil.

The third account is given by Fred Dean in *The Countryman Animal Book* (1973). Dean described observing a young female push the corpse of a male out of a sett which came to rest between two moss-festooned boulders. The sow then re-entered the sett and brought out some bedding, which was also placed between the boulders. This was repeated at least five times before the sow walked down and scratched the pile over the dead badger, covering his corpse and much of the boulders. Dean wrote:

"*The final covering was of loose earth, sand and stones. The she walked round a few times, tidied the place up a bit, patted the mound here and there to give solidity to the covering, and wandered off into the night*." There is a published email report by a north Wiltshire man describing how back in 2007, his granddaughter found a dead badger cub "laid carefully" on a bed of dried moss and grass in a rotten tree stump about 30m (100ft) from the secluded sett she had been observing. The following day the remains had disappeared, so it could not be studied further, but the watcher's initial thoughts had been that the cub had been carefully laid to rest in the stump. The circumstances surrounding this very young badger on dry bedding might suggest that the cub was born in the tree stump, where it subsequently died (or was perhaps stillborn), rather than having been moved there. It is, however, impossible to be certain.

In the summer of 2016, naturalist Sarah Fowler found a dead badger cub in a scrape about three metres (10ft) from the entrance of a sett she had been watching in Lincolnshire. The body was covered over with

twigs and dry leaves. Similarly, wildlife consultant Kate MacRae observed burial behaviour among badgers at a sett on her property in rural Worcestershire. Kate built a large sett on her land and fitted infrared cameras inside to monitor the badgers' subterranean behaviour, during which she observed the death of a seemingly old badger sow in one of the chambers. Unfortunately, shortly after the sow expired, a power cut caused the cameras to fail. When power was eventually restored, the badger's body had been covered with earth in the chamber, presumably by other clan members.

Why might animals choose to bury their dead? In humans, burial has profound psychological and, in those who are religious, spiritual implications. Certainly, the behaviour by Vezey-Ftizgerald can be interpreted as grief or mourning by the sow. We do know, however, that both badgers and foxes are intelligent, social mammals, so the theory should not be dismissed out of hand.

The most obvious reason for burial is to remove a body that will release unpleasant odours and perhaps attract predators or promote the spread of disease as it decomposes. Indeed, Vezey-Fitzgerald described the old boar's carcass as writhing with ants and having an deeply unpleasant smell, despite having been buried for less than two days. Likewise, both Kate MacRae and Sarah Fowler describe maggots and/or flies present on the remains they found. Burial also slows the rate of decomposition; hence it is used as a food storage strategy by several species, including foxes already mentioned.
In May 2019, Mal Ingham observed a sow killed on a road near a badger sett, being moved off the roadside and into nearby woodland. A motion camera setup nearby revealed that the corpse was tentatively investigated by her clan mates, but more interesting was that the badgers apparently stopped using that well-worn trail! According to Mal, the badgers were "*purposely taking a less direct route to their foraging grounds*" to avoid the sow's corpse. This single observation alone is insufficient to draw any conclusions, but if might imply that badgers may be deterred by the presence of the dead bodies of their own kind, helping to explain why there might be motivation to hide them.

So, why so few reports and why mostly among badgers? Reports of foxes carrying/burying other foxes are invariably cases of caching

potential prey. Badgers will also eat carrion, including their own species, but are not known to cache food, so it is unlikely that reports of burial represent the storage of leftovers. It's also worth noting that we actually know very little of the behaviour of these two species, particularly badgers, which spend most their time underground. Foxes use earths only for rearing their cubs and during poor weather. Spending most of their time above ground implies their likelihood of dying above ground is higher than it is for badgers and most foxes probably never encounter the need to remove a dead individual from their earth. We know fox cub mortality can be high, but presumably dead cubs are either eaten by the vixen or the other cubs. These behavioural differences might cause badgers to be more prone to burying, or at least removing, their dead than foxes.

So, storing food probably explains reports of foxes burying other foxes, while sanitation is most likely the reason for badgers doing the same. That said, it's not a universal badger behaviour. *WildCRU* biologist Christina Buesching reported that she's never noticed the*Wytham Woods* badgers showing any interest in removing carcasses, even cubs, from the periphery of the sett. Furthermore, despite the many hundreds of badger watchers around the country logging many thousands of hours at their local setts, descriptions of 'badger funerals' are still an exceptionally rare phenomenon.

"*All that can be said at present about badger funerals is that if they do occur, they are very rare events. But badgers are remarkable creatures and it is well to keep an open mind about the possibility*." Badgers, by Ernest G. Neal & Chris Cheeseman (1998).

NOTES & QUERIES

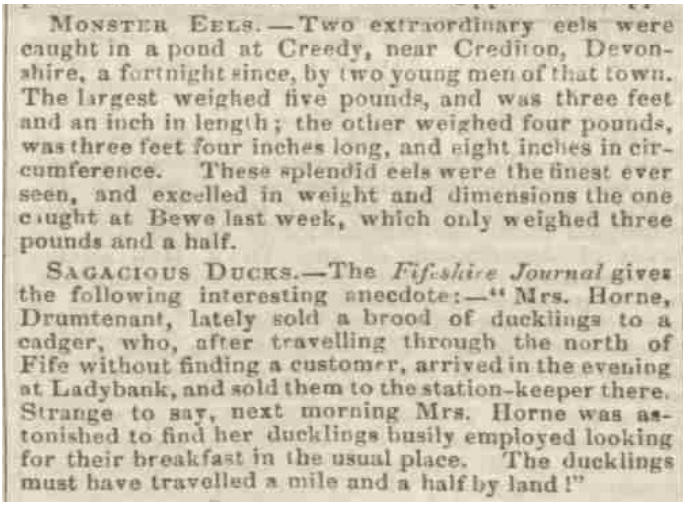
A Monkey Man

Connecticut Western News December 7th 1911

The Danbury News reported: " A large and strange animal was seen on Candlewood mountain. The animal, or wild man, is vouched for by reliable persons. It resembled a man ,but ran along the ground like a monkey."

Monster eels and wise ducks

Below: **The Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser October 7th 1848**



MONSTER EELS.—Two extraordinary eels were caught in a pond at Creedy, near Crediton, Devonshire, a fortnight since, by two young men of that town. The largest weighed five pounds, and was three feet and an inch in length; the other weighed four pounds, was three feet four inches long, and eight inches in circumference. These splendid eels were the finest ever seen, and excelled in weight and dimensions the one caught at Bewe last week, which only weighed three pounds and a half.

SAGACIOUS DUCKS.—The *Fifeshire Journal* gives the following interesting anecdote:—"Mrs. Horne, Drumtenant, lately sold a brood of ducklings to a cadger, who, after travelling through the north of Fife without finding a customer, arrived in the evening at Ladybank, and sold them to the station-keeper there. Strange to say, next morning Mrs. Horne was astonished to find her ducklings busily employed looking for their breakfast in the usual place. The ducklings must have travelled a mile and a half by land!"

© British Newspaper Archive

Giant Bee Rediscovered

The Guardian February 22nd 2019

It was reported in The Guardian of this date that a huge bee ,the size of an adult`s thumb, named Wallace`s giant bee (*Megachile pluto*) after British naturalist and explorer Alfred Russel Wallace who discovered it on the Indonesian island of Bacan, had been rediscovered by Clay Bolt and others in the North Moluccas islands of Indonesia . This giant bee is four times larger than a honey bee. The species was last seen in 1981. This time a female of the giant bee was found living inside a termite`s nest.

Mystery Creatures of the Jungle

San Diego Union October 31st 1926

If the natives` rumors are to be believed, there are many animals unknown to natural history in the jungles and forests of Africa. Quite recently, for example, a hunting party reported having seen traces of a giant lizard of Zululand, first described by King Lewanika in an official letter to the British Resident. This creature is said to have a snake`s head and to be six feet in height.

The late F.C.Selous, the great hunter, frequently spoke of the Nandi bear, another creature that has never yet been seen by a white man, although natives declare that they have tracked it. A hideous animal, with an ape-like head and a bear`s body, it lives in the Kenya forests, and raids villages by night. The lately retired chief game warden of Kenya is firmly convinced of the creature`s existence.

In the swamps of the Nile Valley is a species of giant serpent, upwards of forty feet in length, according to a writer in London Tit-Bits. This reptile, which has the markings of a cobra, is known as the Lau. It has been seen by a number of hunters, and an expedition is now being formed with the object of attempting to track and

capture it.

A giant aquatic rhinoceros is yet another of these little-known creatures that may soon be introduced to the world`s zoos. An expedition left Cape Town not long ago for the purpose of discovering it, but so far no results have been forthcoming.

A monster cat, known to the natives as the Nunda, recently made its appearance in a Tanganyika village. Its depredations terrified the inhabitants, for it killed two native policemen and mauled others. Those who saw it describe it as being like a huge tabby cat, as big as an ape. The suggestion of experienced hunters is that it is a hybrid of a lion and some other animal ; it was certainly not an ordinary lion or leopard.

Stamp of British East Africa 1958 Wikipedia Commons

Wallaby mutilation case from Staffordshire in the 1950s

Macclesfield Courier October 17th 1957

This story is rather unusual because apparently it was a clear cut case of a youthful miscreant damaging another person`s creatures (with a strong hint of class struggle which would appeal to Marxist Forteans) and not a supernatural or paranormal event. However, you can judge for yourself!

Mutilation of wallabies at Swythamley

Some found with their tails cut, others dead

During the hearing of a case at Leek County Court on Monday, (that is Monday 14th October - Richard) mention was made of wallabies on the Swythamley Estate being found with their tails cut and others dead or distressed through being chased. The case was one in which Sir Philip Lee Brocklehurst ,Bart ,J.P. of Swythamley Park ,Wincle,claimed £25 damages for trespass and sought an injunction against Maurice Ephraim Salt,an 18-year-old apprentice brick-layer, of Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent, to restrain him from entering the Swythamley estate...Damages of £2 with costs were awarded and as Salt had given an undertaking on oath that he did not intend to go on the estate again ,this was accepted by Judge H.A. Tucker.

Mr G.L.Lichfield, for Sir Philip, told the court that on part of the estate wallabies had been found with their tails cut and others either dead or distressed through being chased...On an occasion just before Christmas 1956 he (Salt) saw a dead wallaby there (Hen Cloud,

Part of the Roaches) In June this year he went to Hen Cloud to take photographs not to chase wallabies or harm them...He had never been on the Swythamley Estate since and he did not intend to go there again.

Giant eel in a colliery

A MONSTER EEL FOUND AT A COLLIERY IN THE FOREST OF DEAN: TWO MINERS WITH THEIR CAPTURE.

This eel was found struggling on a bank at the Cannof Colliery, Forest of Dean. It weighed 4½ lb. and was 38 in. long—the largest ever found in the Forest. How it got there is a mystery, as Cannof Pit is some miles from the Severn or the Wye.

"How it got there is a mystery…" Huge eel in a colliery.
The Illustrated London News November 23rd 1929

© British Newspaper Archive

Kangaroo hunt in Surrey 1851

Alexandria Gazette (Virginia) February 4th 1851 from the **London Journal**

KANGAROO HUNT

" A very extraordinary circumstance occurred a few weeks ago in West Surrey, inasmuch as there was a genuine kangaroo hunt in the vicinity of Dorking. As such an event, perhaps is unparalleled in England, an account of the chase may not be uninteresting to our readers. It seems some time in the month of May or June last, a kangaroo escaped from a pen in which it had been confined at Wotton in the seat of Mr J.W. Evelyn, the member of parliament; and the animal, from that time till it was caught ran wild in the neighbouring woods, bidding defiance to several attempts to effect its capture… (The article then goes on to explain that the kangaroo was hunted, in September 1850 by a pack of Mr Evelyn`s hounds to Leith Hill where the scent of the kangaroo had beckoned the hounds and hunters) "Here the animal`s peculiar mode of progression was exhibited in a style which astonished the field, a singular succession of leaps carrying it over the ground at a rate perfectly startling. Those who were well mounted were enabled to go the pace, and they speedily found themselves at the top of Leith Hill, where the kangaroo took to the road, and for about a mile and a half they all dashed along, the field rapidly augmenting in numbers as they proceeded in the novel chase. At last, hard pressed, the animal took refuge in a pond on High Ash Pond, Abinger, where a groom succeeded in capturing him though not without receiving a fraternal embrace, from which his shoulder suffered for some days…"

Relief map of Surrey, UK.

Equirectangular map projection on WGS 84 datum, with N/S stretched 160% Wikipedia Commons x shows approximate location of Leith Hill

Horned cat in Oregon

The Democrat (Oregon) May 2nd 1873

“These “hills” (there are quite a few of them in Douglas county, and I suppose that there would have been more had there been room) are

also well represented by different varieties of wild game, “varmints” included. Among the latter, a new species of wild cat has lately been discovered , some of them having rudimentary horns, and they are said to be very destructive to growing vegetation.”

2,000 year old statue found in New York

The Washington Post

July 21st 1922

Statue,2,000 years old, is dug up in Yonkers

“Pure Greek Work of Master Was Buried Under Water Main at least 30 Years.

Yonkers,NY., July 20(by the Associated Press). Buried 3 feet below a water main which had not been disturbed since it was lain 38 years ago, workmen have found a statue, declared to be “pure Greek”, and 2000 years old, “at Greystone, Samuel Untermyer`s country place.

Isidore Kopti, sculptor, after a careful examination today declared that,in his opinion, the work not only was real Greek, but it was too good to have been done by any but a real master. The statue is of a woman,and stands about 4 feet 6 inches without the head, which had been broken off.” “No theory for the presence of the statue has been advanced either by the police or art experts who have seen it.”

Wolf - Fox Hybrids in Scotland?

I was told, in March 2019 by a friend in Macclesfield that a farmer contact of his had told him about larger than normal greyish-yellow foxes in the Cairngorms thought to be modern wolf-fox hybrids. Make of that what you will!

French chickens kill French fox

The Guardian March 14th 2019 and elsewhere

Chickens `gang up` on fox and peck it to death

The Guardian of the above date and other British media sources reported the astounding news that a juvenile and possibly unwell fox had been pecked to death by a gang of chickens.

"A fox has died in extraordinary circumstances - pecked to death by the chickens it hoped to feast on in a henhouse. The body of the fox, a juvenile, was found by students at Gros-Chene secondary school, in Brittany. An estimated 3000 free-range chickens live at the schools and, when the fox entered the building they are thought to have ganged up to kill it...None of the chickens was injured. A wildlife expert from Brittany said they were "surprised" by the turn of events…"

A possible wolf or fox on a French or Irish thimble

belonging to

Angela Hampson

Shunka Warak'in

Sent to me by my correspondent Shane aka Shyler Lea in the USA

© Shyler Lea

New species of wild cat in Corsica

The Daily Telegraph June 21st 2019

A legendary Corsican wild cat known as the “cat-fox” or “ghjattu volpe” was brought to light in Corsica in mid 2019.Described as being 3ft 3 inches long with a very wide ears, a black-tipped tail and “highly developed” canine teeth, it preyed upon ewes and goats and is found in the island`s Asco forest.

Sparrows peck a cat to death

Jackson Citizen (USA) August 10th 1900

Marauding Feline Attacks Nests in Ivy and is pecked to death by Hundreds of Angry Birds

Newport Aug 8 - A full grown Maltese cat was literally pecked to death by a flock of sparrows on Pelham Street yesterday morning . The ivy which climbs the north wall of the United Congregational church long furnished a snug retreat for countless sparrows that build their nests there and the thickness of the leaves hides the places where the birds build their nests . This particular cat however had been watching the birds disappear among the leaves and its instinct taught it that there must be a nest of little ones...Pecking and fluttering the birds attacked the cat viciously ,while the latter cried out and hissed and with one disengaged paw struck at its tormentors . The defence was of no avail ,and the assault was kept up until the cat, no longer able to withstand the onslaught fell to the ground a bewildered mass of bristling fur .Even then the birds did not give up the attack but kept at their enemy until they were tired….Some time after the battle one of the witnesses of the encounter concluded he would examine the cat to see what its injuries might be and was surprised to find the animal dead…"

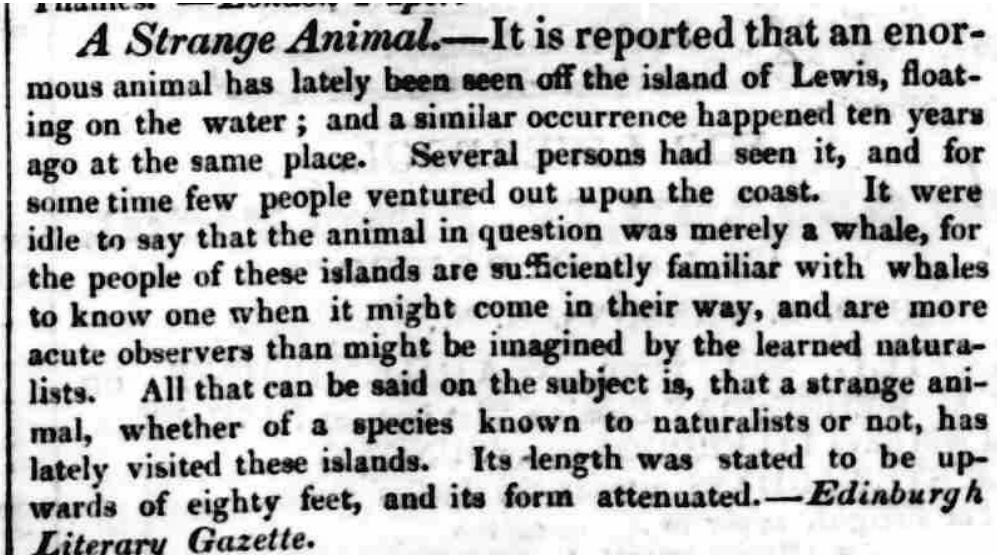
Racoons in the wild in Scotland

Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News November 28th 1956

"About two years ago a pair of American racoons escaped from Glasgow Zoo. To trace them was well nigh impossible , for the racoon is wily as the fox and not only can he "go to ground" but no tree is too difficult for him to climb...Nothing was heard of the racoons until

Saturday November 3rd,1956, when a phone call came from an excited person who said that a strange animal "with the body of a cat and the head of a fox" had been shot by the river at the Douglas estate,Lanarkshire…"

Strange Animal



A Strange Animal.—It is reported that an enormous animal has lately been seen off the island of Lewis, floating on the water; and a similar occurrence happened ten years ago at the same place. Several persons had seen it, and for some time few people ventured out upon the coast. It were idle to say that the animal in question was merely a whale, for the people of these islands are sufficiently familiar with whales to know one when it might come in their way, and are more acute observers than might be imagined by the learned naturalists. All that can be said on the subject is, that a strange animal, whether of a species known to naturalists or not, has lately visited these islands. Its length was stated to be upwards of eighty feet, and its form attenuated.—*Edinburgh Literary Gazette.*

Newry Telegraph April 20th 1830

© British Newspaper Archive

Plague of flies in Russia

The Guardian June 15th 2019

The newspaper reported on a huge plague of flies in villages in the Urals region of Russia. "You can`t hang out your washing to dry or open your windows. Let alone go outside", a woman in Lazorevy told state television, which aired images of thick clouds of flies crawling and buzzing through the village…"

Map showing location of Snakes in Ireland

This map shows the location of snakes that have turned up in Ireland between 1837 and 2006 based upon my own research as published in BioFortean Notes # 2 pp 31 - 42

NASA Earth Observatory satellite image of Ireland 11 October 2010 Wikipedia Commons

Some strange British fishes

The following story appeared in **Notes and Queries volume 10 (257) Sept 30th 1854** page 274. "Monster found at Maidstone"

"The monster found at Maidstone in 1206,which is the subject of H.W.D`s Query, is mentioned by Sir Thomas Baker in his *Chronicle of the Kings of England* 1679 Under the head of " Casualties happening in his (King John`s) time" ,he describes the creature ,with two other prodigies, which savour much of the marvellous:

"Fishes of strange shape were taken in England armed with helmets and shields, and were like unto armed knights, saving they were far greater in proportions. About Maidstone in Kent a certain monster was found stricken with the lightning, which monster had a head like an ass, a belly like a man, and all other parts differing from any other creature. Also in Suffolk was taken a fish in form like a man, and was kept six months upon land with raw flesh and fish ,and then, for that they could have no speech of it, they cast it into the sea again.

Truly the thirteenth century was an age happy in its production of "odd fish"! F.M.MIDDLETON

Hoax giant snakes in Cambodia

Rhino Country by Hakon Skafte (1964.) In this 1964 book there is an account of how tribes people near the border between Cambodia and Vietnam, a place of unexplored dense jungle, tried to deceive a Danish zoologist (the author) and his team, who were searching for the very rare wild ox or kouprey, which were apparently the victims of cave dwelling snakes as long as 25 to 30 yards long (90 feet) ,these snakes supposedly turned on the tribe`s domestic cattle once they tired of the wild ox, but the whole story was concocted to trick the Danes into believing in the need to protect the tribe from Communist guerrillas active at the time

White trout in County Durham and elsewhere

The Journal of the Fell & Rock Climbing Club no 49 Volume 17 (No. II) 1955 p. 153 - 154

There is an account in this journal of blind white trout in Weardale, a valley on the east side of the Pennines. There is an essay in the above mentioned journal by D.H.Maling titled ` The Blind White Trout of Weardale` with the following words in it: " It was on one of these excursions when we first saw the fish. It was not far in - perhaps one hundred or two hundred yards above the waterfall, where there were a series of small waist-deep pools. It appeared to be a trout, but a grey translucent fish which was not affected by the light from our lamps. Its eyes seemed to protrude considerably, and there was no colouration of the retina. We advised the Cave Research Group who, in turn, told the British Museum. The reply was immediate, for, apparently, this was the first example in the British Isles which had been reported to them. We later discovered that other cavers have seen them in other parts of Britain and, indeed, the trout in the Fairy Holes were known in the nineteenth century, when reference was made to them in a local guidebook. But all this was news to the zoologists, who sent their expert on trout to see them for herself."

"This is a region in which it is common to see white trout— although they have been seen in most regions of the cave. Several inches long, and apparently blind, these fish are rare in Britain, and had not previously been caught ot studied closely. However, J. Newrick knocked one out with a detonator explosion, and managed to collect the stunned fish as it floated downstream. It was duly

despatched (alive) to the British MuseumYorkshire Ramblers Club web site

http://www.yrc.org.uk/yrcweb/index.php/journal/vols6-11/82-vol8-cat/no28/517-v8n28p118

Apparently there are also white trout in Ingleborough cave.

Saunders News Letter of April 21st 1781 advertised to let a property belonging to the Rev Champion Brady in the County of Carlow,Ireland which was close to the River Derre where white and brown trout lived. In the book Travels with the Flea (2011) by Jim Perrin is the statement "In Ogof y Ci above Faenor are blind white trout - how many centuries have they lived underground, to evolve thus?" Faenor is in Ceredigion in Wales.

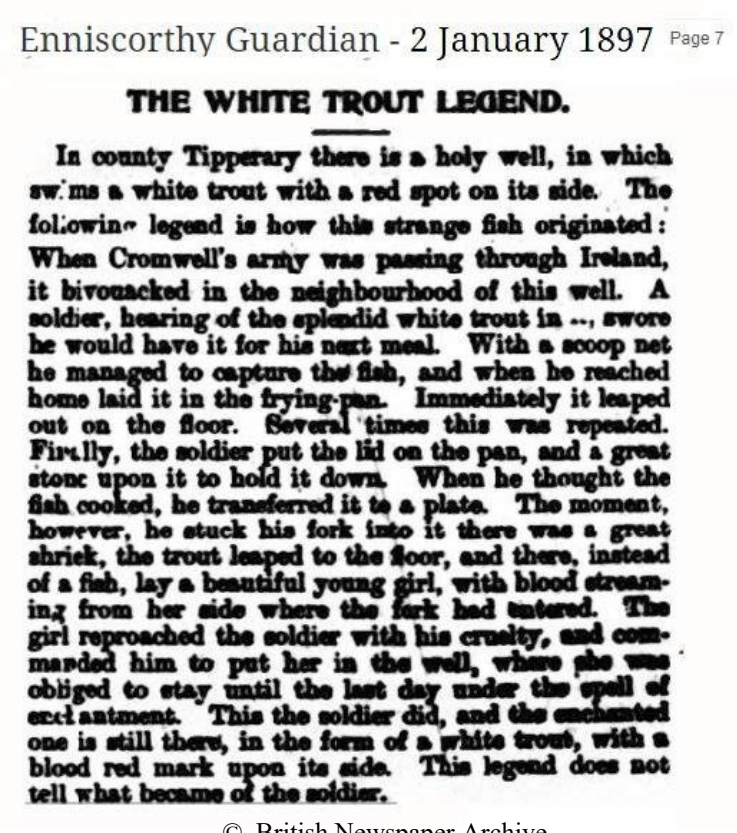
According to The Year Book of Facts in Science and Art (1840) the Irish white trout was a distinct species from other trout.

Irish Holiday by Dorothy Hartley (1938) mentions a "mysterious underground river that connects Loughs Corrib and Mask (in Counties Galway and Mayo, Richard) The hole is about sixty feet deep and the pools are full of blind white trout . They must not be caught , being Holy Fish."

More Irish snake strangeness

7-9 March 1709 Last Week arriv'd in this City, from Ireland, a long Black Snake, with a White Head, and Red Nose, which is esteem'd a great Wonder, because that Country has been thought Productive of no Poisonous REPTIL[E]S: Publick Notice will be given at what Cofee-house this Rarity may be seen. [*The English Post*]

From the website Early Eighteenth Century Newspaper Reports A Sourcebook compiled by Rictor Norton



Enniscorthy Guardian - 2 January 1897 Page 7

THE WHITE TROUT LEGEND.

In county Tipperary there is a holy well, in which swims a white trout with a red spot on its side. The following legend is how this strange fish originated: When Cromwell's army was passing through Ireland, it bivouacked in the neighbourhood of this well. A soldier, hearing of the splendid white trout in —, swore he would have it for his next meal. With a scoop net he managed to capture the fish, and when he reached home laid it in the frying-pan. Immediately it leaped out on the floor. Several times this was repeated. Finally, the soldier put the lid on the pan, and a great stone upon it to hold it down. When he thought the fish cooked, he transferred it to a plate. The moment, however, he stuck his fork into it there was a great shriek, the trout leaped to the floor, and there, instead of a fish, lay a beautiful young girl, with blood streaming from her side where the fork had entered. The girl reproached the soldier with his cruelty, and commanded him to put her in the well, where she was obliged to stay until the last day under the spell of enchantment. This the soldier did, and the enchanted one is still there, in the form of a white trout, with a blood red mark upon its side. This legend does not tell what became of the soldier.

© British Newspaper Archive

Eels on cocaine

The Sun January 21st 2019

The sad but rather amusing story of eels in the Thames being stoned on cocaine appeared in The Sun in January. The headline said Sorted for Eels and Whizz and the sub-heading Fish sent hyper by levels of cocaine in the Thames. " Cocaine snorted by Londoners is polluting the Thames - and making eels hyperactive….Cocaine enters the river in users` urine via treated sewage. Untreated sewage can also get in following storms...Scientists in Italy have found 0.02mg of cocaine per litre is enough to send eels in tanks into a frenzy ,and causes damage to their muscles."

A giant earthworm in Macclesfield

I love it when I have a story from my home town albeit somewhat vague. A friend`s son, Alfie told me that he and some fellow pupils at a local school had seen a giant earthworm though as of the time of writing this I don`t have the exact size.

Giant lizard in the Himalayas

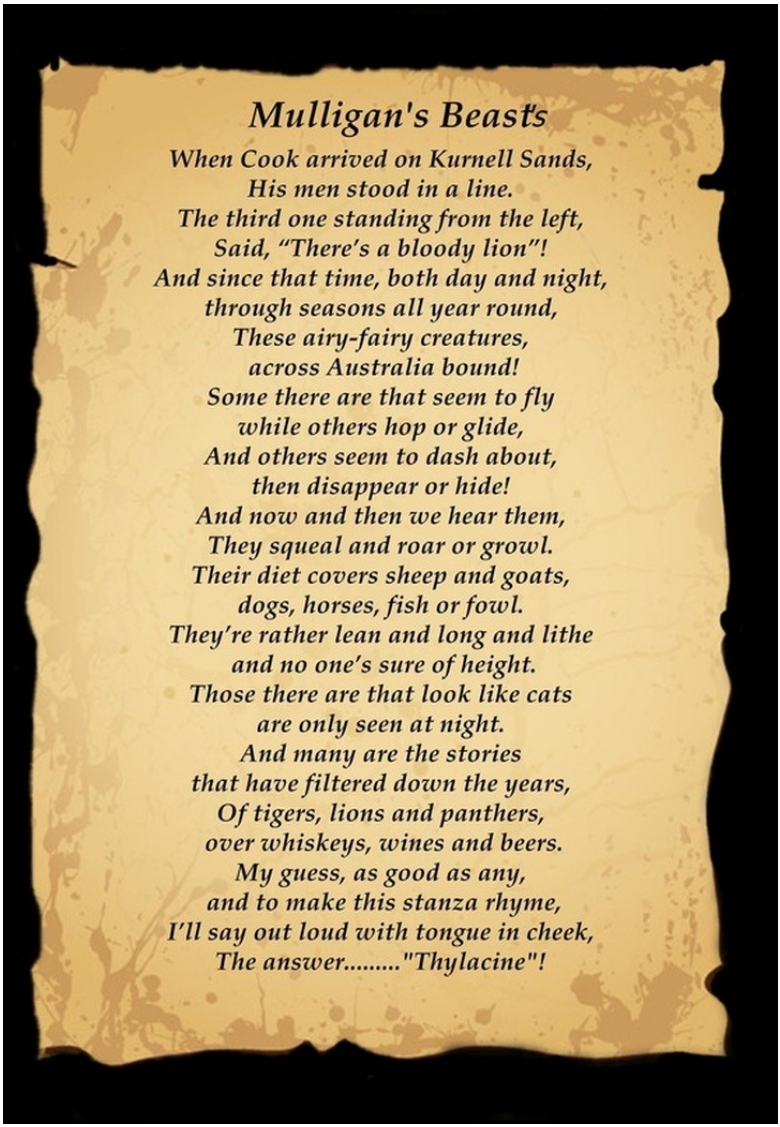
The Field October 24th 1885

Tent Life in the Himalayas

"...Just before arriving at Kunais,the road running through fields, T. saw what he imagined to be the tail of a large snake wriggling in a hedge by the roadside. He sent for his gun and fired at it. A couple of shots killed it, and, on investigating the hedge, it proved to be not a snake, but a species of monster lizard, called a " gua samp". It measured five feet from tip of snout to tip of tail, and in shape and colour exactly resembled a lizard. It had a forked tongue and fangs, and I believe its bite is fatal. These horrible animals are, I am glad to say, comparatively rare; only one or two of our coolies and servants had ever seen one before. I have since heard they are frequently found in tiger jungles…"

Possibly a monitor lizard?

This poem appeared in an issue of the Sydney Bulletin before World War 2 and was kindly sent to me by Flying Snake co - editor Mike Hardcastle



Mulligan's Beasts

When Cook arrived on Kurnell Sands,
His men stood in a line.
The third one standing from the left,
Said, "There's a bloody lion"!
And since that time, both day and night,
through seasons all year round,
These airy-fairy creatures,
across Australia bound!
Some there are that seem to fly
while others hop or glide,
And others seem to dash about,
then disappear or hide!
And now and then we hear them,
They squeal and roar or growl.
Their diet covers sheep and goats,
dogs, horses, fish or fowl.
They're rather lean and long and lithe
and no one's sure of height.
Those there are that look like cats
are only seen at night.
And many are the stories
that have filtered down the years,
Of tigers, lions and panthers,
over whiskeys, wines and beers.
My guess, as good as any,
and to make this stanza rhyme,
I'll say out loud with tongue in cheek,
The answer....."Thylacine"!

Devo Space Junk

Well she was walking all alone
Down the street in the alley
Her name was Sally
I never touched her, she never saw it

When she was hit by space junk
When she was hit by space junk
When she was hit by space junk

"In New York, Miami beach
Heavy metal fell in Cuba
Angola, Saudi Arabia
On Christmas eve", said Norad

A Soviet sputnik hit Africa
India, Venezuela, in Texas, Kansas
It's falling fast Peru too
It keeps coming...

Wikipedia Commons

Vanguard 1 satellite (NASA)

E—MAILS AND LETTERS

I received this e - mail from Flying Snake co-editor An Unusual Insect From Borneo.

I photographed this unusual mantis in Borneo in Southeast Asia back in 2013 and so far have been completely unable to identify it. Andrew Jackson, my colleague who travelled to Borneo with me, thought it was a spider mimicking species, however I thought it looked more like a crane fly (Tipulidae). It was definitely a mantis (Mantodea) and not some unusual mantidfly (Mantispidae), that's about all I can guarantee. I have kept and bred literally hundreds of mantis while curating Stratford Butterfly Farm and also travelled extensively searching for unusual invertebrates and have never seen anything like it before or since.

If any Flying Snake readers have any suggestions I would love to hear them.

Facebook message from Mike Hard-castle on the Yowie

Facebook message July 5th 2019

“I will be sending the main yowie article for flying snake soon but here is a short yowie report i collected when i lived at Kempsey NSW that you can also add to flying snake - Report - Yowie Remains At Kempsey A tribal aborigine) has in his possession the body or skeletal remains of a Yowie, which he obtained from the Bellbrook area, west of Kempsey. He said it looked like a big hairy human.He had or has the remains stored in a shed at his home. Once he told his children or grandchildren to go in and have a look at it, which they did and they came running out of the shed screaming in fear.It is not known whether the yowie was found dead or if It was killed. Source - Work mate who knew the aborigine in possession of the remains. - report collected 2008.”

Letters to Fate

Vol 6 # 12 December 1953

HOMING TURTLE

SANDY is a turtle belonging to the Frank Gilbert family of Pacific Grove, California. The Gilberts like turtles and have several around their home. The turtles even answer to their own names.

Four years ago the Gilberts decided that Sandy, who was a desert turtle, had had a nervous breakdown and would be happier at home in the desert. They drove him out to the Mojave desert 400 miles away and left him. In the week of July 27, 1953, Sandy came back.

He waddled into the yard, answered to his name and gratefully gulped down three coffee tins full of water.

No one could doubt it was Sandy. He had special markings painted on his shell which were still visible. His shell also had a peculiarly shaped hole. It was still there. And he still answered to his name.

Sandy's travel rate figures out to about two miles a week. His toe nails were worn down pretty smooth.

His feat seems to beat that of Blackie, a four=year=old cat of Durham, North Carolina, who recently returned to his home from Gastonia, North Carolina, a distance of 140 air miles, in 81 days.

DREAM OF A FIRE

B. L. BANE of Monterey, California, sends us a brief note which indicates precognition. Tom Hoot is cook for a firefighting crew at Lassen National Forest. Last summer Hoot dreamed there was a terrible forest fire. He jumped out of bed at 3 a.m. and roused the crew. But there was no fire.

To pacify the crew he cooked them some ham and eggs. While they were eating the alarm came in == a terrific forest fire that they were all fueled up to fight.

FROGS IN MASSACHUSETTS

THOSE who think it doesn't rain frogs should skip this, as they probably did Henry Winfred Splitter's "Wonders From The Sky" in October FATE. The residents of Leicester, Massachusetts, will have a hard time being convinced to the contrary, though.

Shortly after midnight on September 7, it rained hard at Leicester. When it ended, residents found frogs of all descriptions scattered for a mile on Paxton Avenue from Leicester Center to the Paxton line.

There were thousands of frogs == tens of thousands. Some parents waked their children who ran out and scopped up bags and baskets full of frogs.

Some people of Leicester thought they had been carried aloft by an offshore minor hurricane. Weather Bureau officials laughed at this idea and suggested that ponds might have overflowed and washed the frogs onto the road. Impossible, replied the residents of Leicester. But nobody could deny that there were plenty of frogs that night. Thousands of them == tens of thousands.

Book Reviews

Black Eyed Children by David Weatherly Leprechaun Press 2017 ISBN 9781945950049 This is a highly readable and interesting, sometimes shocking investigation into the puzzling phenomenon of black-eyed children, a kind of evolution(or should that be devolution?) of the (in)famous Men-in-Black controversy of previous generations. Mr Weatherly gives a thorough examination of this frightening paranormal and folkloric affair using eye witness accounts and effectively demolishing from my point of view the arguments that observations of the black eyed children are merely instances of hoaxes or hallucinations. He does this by using recent eyewitness (that would be normal blue brown or green eyed!) accounts from "victims" of black eyed children visitations or manifestations, from persons from all walks of life and careful, critical research but always done in a tolerant and accepting way. The black eyed children have deep glistening black eyes, leathery skin and badly fitting clothes and insist on being allowed inside their witnesses homes. They have parallels in certain aspects of Islamic folklore. (The Djinns.) They make their appearance suddenly and in seemingly random locations. The author makes the point that black eyed kids are seemingly innocent but their "let us in" is thoroughly sinister. The author does include accounts from what to Mr Weatherly is "abroad." A selection of chapter titles will give you more of a flavour of how the author treats this disturbing story: Chapter 1 Basic Black , Chapter 3 Doctors and Delusional Skeptics, Chapter 9 The Devil You Say, Chapter 15 Black Eyed Beings, Chapter 18 Dark Angels, Chapter 19 Changelings and so on.

Investigating the Impossible by Ulrich Magin Anomalist Books 2011 ISBN 978-1-933665-52-8

This is another excellent book in the fields of Forteana and cryptozoology which I thoroughly recommend and not just because Mr Magin is a correspondent of mine. The book is sub-titled " Sea-Serpents in the Air, Volcanoes that Aren`t, and Other Out-Of-Place Mysteries". It is sub-divided into four sections, Air, Earth ,Fire and Water` and a sample of the content of these sections is as follows: Air - `A UFO in the Year 1561?`, `The Winged Sea-Serpent of the Levant` Earth - `The Mowing Devil and Friends` (this is a favourite section of mine as I was once a keen follower of crop circles) `A Petrified Ship in a Swiss Mine` Fire - `Europe`s Forgotten Volcanoes` , ` Volcanoes as Sea Serpents` Water - ` Iberian Sea Monsters` and ` A Monster in Lago Maggiore` . There are other chapters in addition to these just listed. Magin writes regularly for Fortean Times but his work deserves a wider audience amongst Forteans and beyond. He is an expert at locating cryptozoology and Fortean stories and is the editor of the quarterly publication BILK which largely concentrates on the cryptozoology of continental Europe, rather like Investigating the Impossible in fact. What I enjoy about this book is that it takes something well known and somewhat over-emphasized within Forteana (eg crop circles) and cryptozoology (sea serpents) and finds a new niche within those common themes, something wonderous, startling and rare. Each story is thoroughly examined and meticulously referenced with notes or a bibliography. The student of European Forteana/cryptozoology would be very unwise not to own this book published in 2011 by Anomalist books. I look forwards to a sequel hopefully in the English language.

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